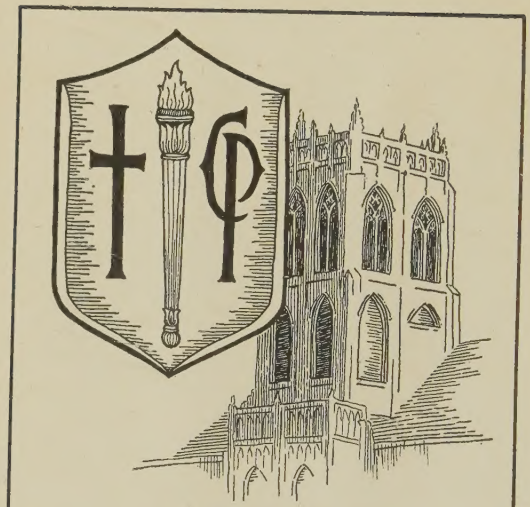

COLLEGE
OF THE PACIFIC

WITHDRAWN

ROUSSEAU.

BY

JOHN MORLEY.

Morley, John Morley, viscount.

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ROUSSEAU.

CHAPTER X.

MONTMORENCY—THE NEW HELOÏSA.

THE many conditions of intellectual productiveness are still hidden in such profound obscurity, that we are as yet unable to explain why in certain natures a period of stormy moral agitation seems to be the indispensable antecedent of their highest creative effort. Byron is one instance, and Rousseau is another, in which the current of stimulating force made rapid way from the lower to the higher parts of character, only expending itself after having traversed the whole range of emotion and faculty, from their meanest, most realistic, most personal forms of exercise, up to the summit of what is lofty and ideal. No man was ever involved in such an odious complication of moral maladies as beset Rousseau in the winter of 1758. Within three years of this miserable epoch he had completed not only the New Heloïsa, which is the monument of his fall, but the Social Contract, which was the most influential, and Emilius,

which was perhaps the most elevated and spiri
all the productions of the prolific genius of France in the eighteenth century. A poor light-hearted Marmontel thought that the secret of Rousseau's success lay in the circumstance that he began to write late, and it is true that no other author so considerable as Rousseau waited until the age of fifty for the full vigour of his inspiration. No tale of years, however, could have ripened such fruit without native strength and incommunicable savour; nor can the splendid mechanical movement of those characters which keep the balance of the world even, impart to literature the peculiar quality, peculiar but not the finest, that comes from experience of the black and unlighted abysses of the soul.

The period of actual production was externally calm. The New Heloïsa was completed in 1759, and published in 1761. The Social Contract was published in the spring of 1762, and Emilius a few weeks later. Throughout this period Rousseau was, for the last time in his life, at peace with most of his fellows; that is to say, though he never relented from his antipathy to the Holbachians, for the time it slumbered, until a more real and serious persecution than any which he imputed to them, transformed his antipathy into a gloomy frenzy.

The new friends whom he made at Montmorency were among the greatest people in the kingdom. The Duke of Luxembourg (1702—64) was a marshal of France, and as intimate a friend of the king as the

king was capable of having. The maréchale de Luxembourg (1707—87) had been one of the most beautiful, and continued to be one of the most brilliant leaders of the last aristocratic generation that was destined to sport on the slopes of the volcano. The former seems to have been a loyal and homely soul; the latter, restless, imperious, penetrating, unamiable. Their dealings with Rousseau were marked by perfect sincerity and straightforward friendship. They gave him a convenient apartment in a small summer lodge in the park, to which he retreated when he cared for a change from his narrow cottage. He was a constant guest at their table, where he met the highest names in France. The marshal did not disdain to pay him visits, or to walk with him, or to discuss his private affairs. Unable as ever to shine in conversation, yet eager to show his great friends that they had to do with no common mortal, Rousseau bethought him of reading the New Heloïsa aloud to them. At ten in the morning he used to wait upon the maréchale, and there by her bedside he read the story of the love, the sin, the repentance of Julie, the distraction of Saint Preux, the wisdom of Wolmar, and the sage friendship of lord Edward, in tones which enchanted her both with his book and its author for all the rest of the day, as all the women in France were so soon to be enchanted.[1] This, as he expected, amply reconciled her to the uncouthness and clumsiness of his conversation, which

[1] *Conf.*, x. 62.

was at least as maladroit and as spiritless : presence of a duchess, as it was in presenc imposing.

One side of character is obviously tested l way in which a man bears himself in his re with persons of greater consideration. Rousseau was taxed by some of his plebeian enemies with a most unheroic deference to his patrician friends. He had a dog whose name was *Duc*. When he came to sit at a duke's table, he changed his dog's name to *Turc*.[1] Again, one day in a transport of tenderness he embraced the old marshal—the duchess embraced Rousseau ten times a day, for the age was effusive—'Ah, monsieur le maréchal, I used to hate the great before I knew you, and I hate them still more, since you make me feel so strongly how easy it would be for them to have themselves adored.'[2] On another occasion he happened to be playing at chess with the prince of Conti, who had come to visit him in his cottage.[3] In spite of the signs and grimaces of the attendants, he insisted on beating the prince in a couple of games. Then he said with respectful

[1] *Conf.*, x. [2] Ib., 70.

[3] Louis Francois de Bourbon, prince de Conti (1717—76), was great-grandson of the brother of the Great Condé. He performed creditable things in the war of the Austrian Succession (in Piedmont 1744, in Belgium 1745); had a scheme of foreign policy as director of the secret diplomacy of Lewis xv. (1745—56), which was to make Turkey, Poland, Sweden, Prussia, a barrier against Russia primarily, and Austria secondarily; finally went into moderate opposition to the court, protesting against the destruction of the *parlements* (1771), and afterwards opposing the reforms of Turgot (1776). Finally he had the honour of refusing the sacraments of the church on his death-bed. See Martin's *Hist. de France*, xv. and xvi.

gravity, 'Monseigneur, I honour your serene highness too much not to beat you at chess always.'[1] A few days after, the vanquished prince sent him a present of game, which Rousseau duly accepted. The present was repeated, but this time Rousseau wrote to madame de Boufflers that he would receive no more, and that he loved the prince's conversation better than his gifts.[2] He admits that this was an ungracious proceeding, and that to refuse game 'from a prince of the blood who throws so much good feeling into the present, is not so much the delicacy of a proud man bent on preserving his independence, as the rusticity of an unmannerly person who does not know his place.'[3] Considering the extreme virulence with which Rousseau always resented gifts even of the most trifling kind from his friends, we find some inconsistency in this condemnation of a sort of conduct to which he tenaciously clung, unless the fact of the donor being a prince of the blood is allowed to modify the quality of the donation, and that would be a hardly defensible position in the austere citizen of Geneva. Madame de Boufflers,[4] the intimate friend of

[1] *Conf.*, 97. *Corr.*, v. 215. [2] *Corr.*, ii. 144. Oct. 7, 1760.

[3] *Conf.*, 98.

[4] The reader will distinguish this correspondent of Rousseau's, *Comtesse* de Boufflers-Rouveret (1727-–18—), from the *Duchesse* de Boufflers, which was the title of Rousseau's Maréchale de Luxembourg before her second marriage; and also from the *Marquise* de Boufflers, said to be the mistress of the old king Stanislaus at Lunéville, and the mother of the chevalier de Boufflers (who was the intimate of Voltaire, sat in the States General, emigrated, did homage to Napoleon, and finally died peaceably under Lewis XVIII.). See Jal's *Dict. Critique*, 259—62. Sainte Beuve has an essay on our present comtesse de Boufflers (*Nouveaux Lundis*, iv. 163). She is the madame de Boufflers who was taken by Beauclerk to visit Johnson in his

our sage Hume, and the yet more intimate friend of the prince of Conti, gave him a judicious warning, when she bade him beware of laying himself open to a charge of affectation, lest it should obscure the brightness of his virtue, and so hinder its usefulness. 'Fabius and Regulus would have accepted such marks of esteem without feeling in them any hurt to their disinterestedness and frugality.'[1] Perhaps there is a flutter of self-consciousness that is not far removed from this affectation, in the pains which Rousseau takes to tell us that after dining at the castle, he used to return home gleefully to sup with a mason who was his neighbour and his friend.[2] On the whole, however, and so far as we know, Rousseau conducted himself not unworthily with these high people. His letters to them are for the most part marked by self-respect and a moderate graciousness, though now and again he makes rather too much case of the difference of rank, and asserts his independence with something too much of protestation.[3] Their relations with him are a curious sign of the interest which the members of the great world took in the men who were quietly preparing the destruction both of them and their world. The maréchale de Luxembourg places this squalid dweller in a hovel on her estate in the place of honour at her table, and embraces his Theresa.

Temple chambers, and was conducted to her coach by him in a remarkable manner (Boswell's *Life*, ch. li. p. 467). Also much talked of in H. Walpole's Letters.

[1] Streckeisen, ii. 32.

[2] *Conf.*, x. 71.

[3] For instance, *Corr.*, ii. 85, 90, 92, etc. 1759.

The prince of Conti pays visits of courtesy and sends game to a man whom he employs at a few sous an hour to copy manuscript for him. The countess of Boufflers, in sending him the money, insists that he is to count her his warmest friend.[1] When his dog dies, the countess writes to sympathize with his chagrin, and the prince begs to be allowed to replace it.[2] And when persecution and trouble and infinite confusion came upon him, they all stood as fast by him as their own comfort would allow. Do we not feel that there must have been in the unhappy man, besides all the recorded pettinesses and perversities which revolt us in him, a vein of something which touched men, and made women devoted to him, until he drove both men and women away? With madame d'Epinay and madame d'Houdetot, as with the dearer and humbler patroness of his youth, we have now parted company. But they are instantly succeeded by new devotees. And the lovers of Rousseau, in all degrees, were not silly women led captive by idle fancy. Madame de Boufflers was one of the most distinguished spirits of her time. Her friendship for him was such, that his sensuous vanity made Rousseau against all reason or probability confound it with a warmer form, and he plumes himself in a manner most displeasing on the victory which he won over his own feelings on the occasion.[3] As a matter of fact he had no feelings to conquer, any more than the

[1] Streckeisen, ii. 28, etc. [2] Ib., 29.

[3] *Conf.*, x. 99.

supposed object of them ever bore him any ill-will for his indifference, as in his mania of suspicion he afterwards believed.

There was a calm about the too few years he passed at Montmorency, which leaves us in doubt whether this mania would ever have afflicted him, if his natural irritation had not been made intense and irresistible by the cruel distractions that followed the publication of Emilius. He was tolerably content with his present friends. The simplicity of their way of dealing with him contrasted singularly, as he thought, with the never-ending solicitudes, as importunate as they were officious, of the patronizing friends whom he had just cast off.[1] Perhaps, too, he was soothed by the companionship of persons whose rank may have flattered his vanity, while unlike Diderot and his old literary friends in Paris, they entered into no competition with him in the peculiar sphere of his own genius. Madame de Boufflers, indeed, wrote a tragedy, but he told her gruffly enough that it was a plagiarism from Southerne's Oroonoko.[2] That Rousseau was thoroughly capable of this hateful emotion of sensitive literary jealousy is proved, if by nothing else, by his readiness to suspect that other authors were jealous of him. No one suspects others of a meanness of this kind, unless he is capable of it himself. The resounding success which followed the New Heloïsa and Emilius put an end to this apprehension, for it raised him to a pedestal in popular esteem as high as that on which

[1] *Conf.*, x. 57. [2] Ib., xi. 119.

Voltaire stood triumphant. This very success unfortunately brought troubles which destroyed Rousseau's last chance of ending his days in full reasonableness.

Meanwhile he enjoyed his last interval of moderate wholesomeness and peace. He felt his old healthy joy in the green earth. One of the letters[1] commemorates his delight in the great scudding south-west winds of February, soft forerunners of the spring, so sweet to all who live with nature. At the end of his garden was a summer-house, and here even on wintry days he sat composing or copying. It was not music only that he copied. He took a curious pleasure in making transcripts of his romance, which he sold to the duchess of Luxembourg and other ladies for some moderate fee.[2] Sometimes he moved from his own lodging to the quarters in the park which his great friends had induced him to accept. 'They were charmingly neat; the furniture was of white and blue. It was in this perfumed and delicious solitude, in the midst of woods and streams and choirs of birds of every kind, with the fragrance of the orange-flower poured round me, that I composed in a continual ecstasy the fifth book of Emilius. With what eagerness did I hasten every morning at sunrise to breathe the balmy air! What good coffee I used to take under the porch in company with my Theresa! My cat and my dog made the rest of our party. That

[1] *Corr.*, ii. 196. Feb. 16, 1761.
[2] *Corr.*, ii. 102, 176, etc.

would have sufficed for all my life, and I should never have known weariness.' And so to the assurance, so often repeated under so many different circumstances, that here was a true heaven upon earth, where if fates had only allowed, he would have known unbroken innocence and lasting happiness.[1]

Yet he had the wisdom to warn others against attempting a life such as he craved for himself. As on a more memorable occasion, there came to him a young man who would fain have been with him always, and whom he sent away exceeding sorrowful. 'The first lesson I should give you would be not to surrender yourself to the taste you say you have for the contemplative life, which is only an indolence of the soul, to be condemned at any age, but especially so at yours. Man is not made to meditate but to act. Labour therefore in the condition of life in which you have been placed by your family and by providence: that is the first precept of the virtue which you wish to follow; and if residence at Paris, joined to the business you have there, seems to you irreconcilable with virtue, do better still, and return to your own province; go live in the bosom of your family, serve and solace your honest parents; there you will be truly fulfilling the duties that virtue imposes on you.'[2] This intermixture of sound sense with unutterable perversities almost suggests a doubt how far the perversities were sincere, until we remember that Rousseau, even in the most exalted part of his writings, was

[1] *Conf.*, x. 60. [2] *Corr.*, ii. 12.

careful to separate immediate practical maxims from his theoretical principles of social philosophy.[1]

Occasionally his good sense takes so stiff and unsympathetic a form, as to fill us with a warmer dislike for him than his worst paradoxes inspire. A correspondent had written to him about the frightful persecutions which were being inflicted on the protestants in some district of France. Rousseau's letter is a masterpiece in the style of Eliphaz the Temanite. Our brethren must surely have given some pretext for the evil treatment to which they were subjected. One who is a christian must learn to suffer, and every man's conduct ought to conform to his doctrine. Our brethren, moreover, ought to remember that the word of god is express upon the duty of obeying the laws set up by the prince. The writer cannot venture to run any risk by interceding in favour of our brethren with the government. 'Every one has his own calling upon the earth; mine is to tell the public harsh but useful truths. I have preached humanity, gentleness, tolerance, so far as it depended upon me; 'tis no fault of mine if the world has not listened. I have made it a rule to keep to general truths; I produce no libels, no satires; I attack no man, but men; not an action but a vice.'[2] The worst of the worthy

[1] As M. St. Marc Girardin has put it: 'There are in all Rousseau's discussions two things to be carefully distinguished from one another; the maxims of the discourse, and the conclusions of the controversy. The maxims are ordinarily paradoxical; the conclusions are full of good sense.' (*Rev. des Deux Mondes*, Aug., 1852, p. 501.)

[2] *Corr.*, ii. 244—6. Oct. 24, 1761.

sort of people, wrote Voltaire, 'is that they are such cowards: a man groans over a wrong, he holds his tongue, he takes his supper, and he forgets all about it.'[1] If Voltaire could not write like Fénélon, at least he could never talk like Tartufe; he responded to no tale of wrong with words about his mission, with strings of antitheses, but always with royal anger and the spring of alert and puissant endeavour. In an hour of oppression one would rather have been the friend of the saviour of the Calas and of Sirven, than of the vindicator of theism.

Rousseau, however, had good sense enough in less equivocal forms than this. For example, in another letter he remonstrates with a correspondent for judging the rich too harshly. 'You do not bear in mind that having from their childhood contracted a thousand wants which we are without, then to bring them down to the condition of the poor would be to make them more miserable than the poor. We should be just towards all the world, even to those who are not just to us. Ah, if we had the virtues opposed to the vices which we reproach in them, we should forget that they were in the world. One word more. To have any right to despise the rich, we ought ourselves to be prudent and thrifty, so as to have no need of riches.'[2] In the observance of this just precept Rousseau was to the end of his life absolutely without fault. No one was more rigorously careful to make his inde-

[1] *Corr.*, 1766. *Œuv.*, lxxv. 364.
[2] *Corr.*, ii. 32. (1758).

pendence sure by the fewness of his wants and a minute financial probity. This firm limitation of his material desires was one cause of his habitual and almost invariable refusal to accept presents, though no doubt another cause was the stubborn and ungracious egoism which made him resent any obligation.

It is worth remembering in illustration of the peculiar susceptibility and softness of his character where women were concerned—it was not quite without exception—that he did not fly into a fit of rage over their gifts, as he did over those of men. He remonstrated, but in gentler key. 'What could I do with four pullets?' he wrote to a lady who had presented them to him. 'I began by sending two of them to people to whom I am indifferent. That made me think of the difference there is between a present and a testimony of friendship. The first will never find in me anything but a thankless heart; the second. . . . Ah, if you had only given me news of yourself without sending me anything else, how rich and how grateful you would have made me; instead of that, the pullets are eaten, and the best thing I can do is to forget all about them; let us say no more.'[1] Rude and repellent as this may seem, and as it is, there is an ugly kind of playfulness about it in comparison with the truculence which he was not slow to exhibit to men. If a friend presumed to thank him for any service, he was peremptorily rebuked for his ignorance of the true qualities of friendship, with

[1] *Corr.*, ii. 63. Jan. 15, 1759.

which thankfulness has no connection. He ostentatiously refused to offer thanks for services himself, even to a woman whom he always treated with so much consideration as the maréchale de Luxembourg. He once declared boldly that modesty is a false virtue,[1] and though he did not go so far as to make gratitude the subject of a corresponding formula of denunciation, he always implied that this too is one of the false virtues. He confessed to Malesherbes, without the slightest contrition, that he was ungrateful by nature.[2] To madame d'Epinay he once went still further, declaring that he found it hard not to hate those who had used him well.[3] Undoubtedly he was right so far as this, that gratitude answering to a spirit of exaction in a benefactor is no merit, and that a service done in expectation of gratitude is from that fact stripped of the quality which makes gratitude due, and is a mere piece of egoism in altruistic disguise. Kindness in its genuine forms is a testimony of good feeling, and conventional speech is perhaps a little too hard, as well as too shallow and unreal, in calling the recipient evil names, because he is unable to respond to the good feeling. Rousseau's way of expressing this, and of protesting against a conception of friendship and helpfulness, which makes of what ought to be disinterested helpfulness a title to everlasting tribute, was harsh and unamiable, but it was not without an element of uprightness and vera-

[1] Bernardin de St. Pierre, xii. 102.
[2] 4th Letter, p. 375.
[3] *Mém.*, ii. 299.

city. As in his greater themes, so in his paradoxes upon private relations, he hid wholesome ingredients of rebuke to the unquestioning acceptance of common form. 'I am well pleased,' he said to a friend, 'both with thee and thy letters, except the end, where thou say'st thou art more mine than thine own; for thou liest, and it is not worth while to take the trouble to *thee* and *thou* a man as thine intimate, only to tell him untruths.'[1] Chesterfield was for people with much self-love of the small sort, probably a more agreeable person to meet than Doctor Johnson, but Johnson was the more wholesome companion for a man.

Occasionally, though not very often, he seems to have let spleen take the place of honest surliness, and so drifted into clumsy and ill-humoured banter of a sort that gives a dreary shudder to one fresh from Voltaire. 'So you have chosen for yourself a tender and virtuous mistress! I am not surprised; all mistresses are that. You have chosen her in Paris! To find a tender and virtuous mistress in Paris is to have not such bad luck. You have made her a promise of marriage? My friend, you have made a blunder; for if you continue to love, the promise is superfluous, and if you do not it is of no avail. You have signed it with your blood? That is all but tragic; but I don't know that the choice of the ink in which he writes gives anything to the fidelity of the man who signs.'[2]

We can only add that the health in which a man writes may possibly excuse the dismal quality of what

[1] *Corr.*, ii. 98. July 10, 1759. [2] *Corr.*, ii. 106. Nov. 10, 1759.

he writes, and that Rousseau was now as always the prey of bodily pain which, as he was conscious, made him distraught. 'My sufferings are not very excruciating just now,' he wrote on a later occasion, 'but they are incessant, and I am not out of pain a single moment day or night, and this quite drives me mad. I feel bitterly my wrong conduct and the baseness of my suspicions; but if anything can excuse me, it is my mournful state, my loneliness,' and so on.[1] This prolonged physical anguish, which was made more intense towards the end of 1761 by the accidental breaking of a surgical instrument,[2] sometimes so nearly wore his fortitude away as to make him think of suicide.[3] In lord Edward's famous letter on suicide in the New Heloïsa, while denying in forcible terms the right of ending one's days merely to escape from intolerable mental distress, he admits that inasmuch as physical disorders only grow incessantly worse, violent bodily pain, when it is incurable, may be an excuse for a man making away with himself; he ceases to be a human being before dying, and in putting an end to his life he only completes his release from a body that embarrasses him, and contains his soul no longer.[4] The thought was often present to him in this form. Eighteen months later than our last date, the purpose grew very deliberate under an aggravation of his malady, and he seriously looked upon his own case as

[1] *Corr.*, ii. 179. Jan. 18, 1761.
[2] *Corr.*, ii. 268. Dec. 12, 1761.
[3] *Corr.*, ii. 28. Dec. 23, 1761.
[4] *Nouv., Hél.*, III. xxii. 147.

falling within the conditions of lord Edward's exception.[1] It is difficult, in the face of outspoken declarations like these, to know what writers can be thinking of when, with respect to the controversy on the manner of Rousseau's death, they pronounce him incapable of such a dereliction of his own most cherished principles as self-destruction. It would perhaps have been no bad thing if he had executed his resolve in 1763. The world would have lost the Musings and the Confessions, but it would have escaped the tale of a most unamiable life, and Rousseau himself would have lost no happiness that could compensate for the close entanglement of gloom and wretchedness in which he was henceforth beset.

As he sat gnawed by pain, with surgical instruments on his table, and sombre thoughts of suicide in his head, the ray of a little episode of romance shone in incongruous upon the scene. Two ladies in Paris, absorbed in the New Heloïsa, like all the women of the time, identified themselves with the Julie and the Claire of the novel that none could resist. They wrote anonymously to the author, claiming their identification with characters fondly supposed to be immortal. 'You will know that Julie is not dead, and that she lives to love you; I am not this Julie, you perceive it by my style; I am only her cousin, or rather her friend, as Claire was.' The unfortunate Saint Preux responded as gallantly as he could be expected to do in the intervals of surgery. 'You do not know that

[1] *Corr.*, iii. 235. Aug. 1, 1763.

the Saint Preux to whom you write is tormented with a cruel and incurable disorder, and that the very letter he writes to you is often interrupted by distractions of a very different kind.'[1] He figures rather uncouthly, but the unknown fair were not at first disabused, and one of them never was. Rousseau was deeply suspicious. He feared to be made the victim of a masculine pleasantry. From women he never feared anything. His letters were found too short, too cold. He replied to the remonstrance by a reference of extreme coarseness. His correspondents wrote from the neighbourhood of the Palais Royal, then and for long after the haunt of mercenary women. 'You belong to your quarter more than I thought,' he said brutally,[2] for the vulgarity of the lackey was never quite obliterated, even when the lackey had written Emilius. This was too much for the imaginary Claire. 'I have given myself three good blows on my breast for the correspondence that I was silly enough to open between you,' she wrote to Julie, and she remained implacable. The Julie was constant to the end of Rousseau's life; she took his part vehemently in the quarrel with Hume, and wrote in defence of his memory after he was dead. She is the most remarkable of all the instances of the unreasoning passion which the New Heloïsa inflamed in the breasts of the women of that age. Madame Latour pursued Jean Jacques with a devotion that no coldness could repulse. She only saw him three times in all, the first

[1] *Corr.*, ii. 226. Sept. 29, 1761. [2] p. 294. Jan. 11, 1762.

time not until 1766, when he was on his way through Paris to England. The second time, in 1772, she visited him without mentioning her name, and he did not recognise her; she brought him some music to copy, and went away unknown. She made another attempt, announcing herself: he gave her a frosty welcome, and then wrote to her that she was to come no more. With a strange fidelity she bore him no grudge, but cherished his memory and sorrowed over his misfortunes to the day of her death. He was not an idol of very sublime quality, but we may think kindly of the idolatress.[1] Worshippers are ever dearer to us than their graven images. Let us turn to the romance which touched women in this way, and helped to give a new spirit to an epoch.

II.

As has been already said, it is the business of criticism to separate what is accidental in form, transitory in manner, and merely local in suggestion, from the general ideas which live under a casual and particular literary robe. And so we have to distinguish the external conditions under which a book like the New Heloïsa is produced, from the living qualities in the author, which gave the external conditions their hold upon him, and turned their

[1] Madame Latour (Nov. 7, 1730 -Sept. 6, 1789) was the wife of a man in the financial world, who used her ill and dissipated as much of her fortune as he could, and from whom she separated in 1775. After that she resumed her maiden name and was known as Madame de Franqueville. Musset-Pathay, ii. 182, and Sainte Beuve, *Causeries*, ii. 63.

development in one direction rather than another. We are only encouraging poverty of spirit, when we insist on fixing our eyes on a few of the minutiæ of construction, instead of patiently seizing larger impressions and more durable meanings; nor less so, when we omit to move from the fortuitous incidents of composition, to the central elements of the writer's character, which already awaited them in full preparation for active expression.

These incidents in the case of the New Heloïsa we know; the sensuous communion with nature in her summer mood in the woods of Montmorency, the long hours and days of solitary expansion, the despairing passion for the too sage Julie of actual experience. But the power of these impressions from without depended on secrets of conformation within. An adult man with marked character is, consciously or unconsciously, his character's victim or sport; it is his whole system of impulses, ideas, pre-occupations, that make those critical situations ready, into which he too hastily supposes that an accident has drawn him. And this inner system not only prepares the situation for him; it forces his interpretation. Whatever interest the New Heloïsa possesses for the critic, springs from the fact that it was the outcome, in a sense of which the author himself was probably unconscious, of the general doctrine of life and conduct which he only professed to expound in writings of graver pretension. Rousseau generally spoke of his romance in phrases of deprecation, as the monu-

ment of a passing weakness. It was in truth as entirely a monument of the strength as well as the weakness of his whole scheme, as his weightiest piece. That it was not so deliberately, added to its effect; the slow and musing air which underlies all the assumption of ardent passion, made a way for the doctrine into sensitive natures, that would have been untouched by the pretended ratiocination of the Discourses, and the didactic manner of the Emilius.

Rousseau's scheme, which we must carefully remember was only present to his own mind in an informal and fragmentary way, may be shortly described as an attempt to rehabilitate human nature in as much of its primitive freshness as the hardened crust of civil institutions and social use might allow. In this survey, however incoherently carried out, the mutual passion of the two sexes was the very last that was likely to escape Rousseau's attention. Thus it was with this that he began. The Discourses had been an attack upon the general ordering of society, and an exposition of the mischief it has done to human nature at large. The romance treated one set of emotions in human nature particularly, though it also touches the whole emotional sphere indirectly. And this limitation of the field was accompanied by a total revolution in the method. Polemic was abandoned; the presence of hostility was forgotten in appearance, if not in the heart of the writer; instead of discussion, presentation; instead of abstract analysis of principles, concrete drawing of persons, and

dramatic delineation of passion. There is, it is true, a monstrous superfluity of ethical exposition of most doubtful value, but this as we have already said was in the manners of the time. All people in those days with any pretensions to use their minds, wrote and talked in a superfine ethical manner, and violently translated the dictates of sensibility into formulas of morality. The important thing to remark is not that this semi-didactic strain is present, but that there is much less of it, and that it takes a far more subordinate place, than the subject and the reigning taste would have led us to expect. It is true, also, that Rousseau declared his intention in the two characters of Julie and Wolmar, eventually her husband, of leading to a reconciliation between the two great opposing parties, the devout and the rationalistic; of teaching them the lesson of reciprocal esteem, by showing the one that it is possible to believe in a god without being a hypocrite, and the other that it is possible to be an unbeliever without being a scoundrel.[1] This intention, if it was really present to Rousseau's mind while he was writing, and not an afterthought characteristically welcomed for the sake of giving loftiness and gravity to a composition of which he was always a little ashamed, must at any rate have been of a very pale kind. It would hardly have occurred to a critic, unless Rousseau had so emphatically pointed it out, that such a design had presided over the composition, and contemporary readers saw

[1] *Corr.*, ii. 214. *Conf.*, ix. 289.

nothing of it. In the first part of the story, which is wholly passionate, it is certainly not visible, and in the second part neither of the two contending factions was likely to learn any lesson with respect to the other; for churchmen would have insisted that Wolmar was really a christian dressed up as an atheist, and philosophers would hardly have accepted Julie as a type of the too believing people who broke Calas on the wheel, and cut off La Barre's head.

French critics tell us that no one now reads the New Heloïsa in France except deliberate students of the works of Rousseau, and certainly no one in this generation reads it in our own country.[1] The action is very slight, and the play of motives very simple, when contrasted with the ingenuity of invention, the elaborate subtleties of psychological analysis, the power of rapid change from one perturbing incident or excited humour to another, which mark the modern writer of sentimental fiction. As the title warns us, it is a story of a youthful tutor and a too fair disciple, straying away from the lessons of cold philosophy into the heated places of passion. The high pride of Julie's father forbade all hope of their union, and in very desperation the unhappy pair lost the self-control of virtue, and threw themselves into the pit that lies so ready to our feet. Remorse followed with quick step, for Julie had with her purity lost

[1] English translations of Rousseau's works appeared very speedily after the originals. A second edition of the Heloïsa was called for as early as May, 1761. See *Corr.*, ii. 223. A German translation of the Heloïsa appeared at Leipzig in 1761, in six duodecimos.

none of the other lovelinesses of a dutiful character. Her lover was hurried away from the country by the generous solicitude of an English nobleman, one of the bravest, tenderest, and best of men. Julie, left undisturbed by his presence, stricken with affliction at the death of a sweet and affectionate mother, and pressed by the importunities of a father whom she dearly loved in spite of the disasters which his will had brought upon her, at length consented to marry a foreign baron from some northern court. Wolmar was much older than she was; a devotee of calm reason, without a system and without prejudices, benevolent, orderly, above all things judicious. The lover meditated suicide, from which he was only diverted by the arguments of lord Edward, who did more than argue; he hurried the forlorn man on board the ship of admiral Anson, then just starting for his famous voyage round the world. And this marks the end of the first episode.

Rousseau always urged that his story was dangerous for young girls, and maintained that Richardson was grievously mistaken in supposing that they could be instructed by romances; it was like setting fire to the house for the sake of making the pumps play.[1] As he admitted so much, he is not open to attack on this side, except from those who hold the theory that no books ought to be written which may not prudently be put into the hands of the young,—a puerile and contemptible doctrine that must emas-

[1] For instance, *Corr.*, ii. 168. Nov. 19, 1762.

culate all literature and all art by excluding the most interesting of human relations and the most powerful of human passions. There is not a single composition of the first rank, outside of science, from the bible downwards, that could undergo the test. The most useful standard for measuring the significance of a book in this respect is found in the manners of the time, and the prevailing tone of contemporary literature. In trying to appreciate the meaning of the New Heloïsa and its popularity, it is well to think of it as a delineation of love, in connection not only with such a book as the Pucelle, where there is at least wit, but with a story like Duclos's, which all ladies both read and were not in the least ashamed to acknowledge that they had read, and a story like Laclos's, which came a generation later, and with its infinite briskness and devilry carried the tradition of artistic impurity to as vigorous a manifestation as it is capable of reaching.[1] To a generation whose literature is as pure as the best English, American, and German literature is in the present day, the New Heloïsa might without doubt be corrupting. To the people who read Crébillon and the Pucelle it was without doubt elevating.

The case is just as strong if we turn from books to manners. Without looking beyond the circle of names that occur in Rousseau's own history, we see how deep the depravity had become. Madame d'Epinay's gallant sat at table with the husband, and

[1] Choderlos de La Clos: 1741—1803.

the husband was perfectly aware of the relations between them. M. d'Epinay had notorious relations with two public women, and was not ashamed to refer to them in the presence of his wife, and even to seek her sympathy on an occasion when one of them was in some trouble. Not only this, but husband and lover used to pursue their debaucheries in the town together in jovial comradeship. An opera dancer presided at the table of a patrician abbé in his country house, and he passed weeks in her house in the town. As for shame, says Barbier on one occasion, ''tis true the king has a mistress, but who has not?—except the duke of Orleans, who has withdrawn to Ste. Geneviève, and is thoroughly despised in consequence, and rightly.'[1] Recking disorder such as all this illustrates, made the passion of the two imaginary lovers of the fair lake seem like a breath from the garden of Eden. One virtue was lost in that simple paradise, but even that loss was followed by circumstances of mental pain and far circling distress, which banished the sin into a secondary place; and what remained to strike the imagination of the time was a delightful picture of fast union between two enchanting women, of the patience and compassionateness of a grave mother, of the chivalrous warmth and helpfulness of a loyal friend. Any one anxious to pick out sensual strokes and turns of grossness, could make a little collection of such defilements from the New Heloïsa without any difficulty. They were in

[1] Journal, iv. 496. (Ed. Charpentier, 1857.)

Rousseau's character, and thus they came out in his work. Saint Preux afflicts us with touches of this kind, just as we are afflicted with similar touches in the Confessions. They were not noticed at that day, when people's ears did not affect to be any chaster than the rest of them.

A historian of opinion is concerned with the general effect that was actually produced by a remarkable book, and with the causes which produced it, rather than with a demonstration that if the readers had all been as wise and as virtuous as the moralist might desire them to be, or if they had all been discriminating and scientific critics, not this, but a very different impression, would have followed. To-day we may wonder at this effect. A long story told in letters has grown a form incomprehensible and intolerable to us. We find Richardson hard to be borne, and he put far greater vivacity and wider variety into his letters than Rousseau did, though he was not any less diffuse, and he abounds in repetitions as Rousseau does not. Rousseau was absolutely without humour; that belongs to the keenly observant natures, and to those who love men in the concrete, not only humanity in the abstract. The pleasantries of Julie's cousin, for instance, are heavy and misplaced. Thus the whole book is in one key, without the dramatic changes of Richardson, too few even as those are. And who now can endure that antique fashion of apostrophizing men and women, hot with passion and eager with all active impulses, in oblique

terms of abstract qualities, as if their passion and their activity were only the inconsiderable embodiment of fine general ideas? We have not a single thrill, when Saint Preux being led into the chamber where his mistress is supposed to lie dying, murmurs passionately, 'What shall I now see in the same place of refuge where once all breathed the ecstasy that intoxicated my soul, in this same object who both caused and shared my transports! the image of death, virtue unhappy, beauty expiring!'[1] This rhetorical artificiality of phrase, so repulsive to the more realistic taste of a later age, was as natural then as the facility of shedding tears, which appears so deeply incredible a kind of performance to a generation that has lost that particular fashion of sensibility, without realising for the honour of its ancestors the physiological truth of the power of the will over the secretions.

The characters seem as stilted as some of the language, to us who are accustomed to an Asiatic luxuriousness of delineation; yet the New Heloïsa was nothing less than the beginning of that fresh, full, highly-coloured style which has now taught us to find so little charm in the source and original of it. Saint Preux is a personage whom no widest charity, literary, philosophic, or christian, can make endurable. Egoism is made thrice disgustful by a ceaseless redundance of fine phrases. The exaggerated conceits of love in our old poets turn graciously on the lover's eagerness to offer every sacrifice at the feet of his

[1] *Nouv. Hél.*, III. xiv. 48.

mistress. Even Werther, stricken creature as he was, yet had the stoutness to blow his brains out, rather than be the instrument of surrounding his beloved's life with snares. Saint Preux's egoism is unbrightened by a single ray of tender abnegation, or a single touch of the sweet humility of devoted passion. The slave of his sensations, he has no care beyond their gratification; with some rotund nothing on his lips about virtue being the only path to happiness, his heart burns with sickly lustfulness; he writes first like a pedagogue infected by some cantharidean philter, and then like a pedagogue without the philter, which is worse. Lovelace and the count of Valmont are manly and hopeful characters in comparison. Werther, again, at least represents a principle of rebellion, in the midst of all his self-centred despair, and he retains strength enough to know that his weakness is shameful. His despair, moreover, is deeply coloured with repulsed social ambition.[1] He feels the world about him. His French prototype represents nothing but the unalloyed selfishness of a sensual love, for which there is no universe outside of its own fevered pulsation.

Julie is much less displeasing, partly perhaps for the reason that she belongs to the less displeasing sex. At least, she preserves fortitude, self-control, profound considerateness for others, and at a certain point her firmness even moves a measure of enthusiasm. If the New Heloïsa could be said to have

[1] E.g. Letters, 40—46.

any moral intention, it is here where women learn from the example of Julie's energetic return to duty the possibility and the satisfaction of bending character back to comeliness and honour. Excellent as this is from a moral point of view, the reader may wish that Julie had been less of a preacher as well as less of a sinner. And even as sinner, she would have been more readily forgiven if she had been less deliberate. A maiden who sacrifices her chastity in order that the visible consequences may force her parents to consent to a marriage, is rather too strategical to be perfectly touching. As was said by the cleverest, though not the greatest, of all the women whose youth was fascinated by Rousseau, when one has renounced the charms of virtue, it is at least well to have all the charms that entire surrender of heart can bestow.[1] In spite of this, Julie struck the imagination of the time, and struck it in a way that was thoroughly wholesome. The type taught men some respect for the dignity of women, and it taught women a firmer respect for themselves. It is useless, even if it be possible, to present an example too lofty for the comprehension of an age. At this moment the most brilliant genius in the country was filling France with impish merriment at the cost of the greatest heroine France had then to boast. In such an atmosphere Julie has the halo of saintliness.

[1] Madame de Stael (1765—1817), in her *Lettres sur les écrits et le caractère de J. J. Rousseau*, written when she was twenty, and her first work of any pretensions. *Œuv.* i., 41. Ed. 1820.

We may say all we choose about the inconsistency, the excess of preaching, the excess of prudence, in the character of Julie. It was said pungently enough by the wits of the time.[1] Nothing that could be said on all this affected the fact that the women between 1760 and the revolution were intoxicated by Rousseau's creation to such a pitch, that they would pay any price for a glass out of which Rousseau had drunk, and kiss a scrap of paper that contained a piece of his handwriting, and vow that no woman of true sensibility could hesitate to consecrate her life to him, if she were only certain to be rewarded by his attachment.[2] The booksellers were unable to meet the demand. The book was let out at the rate of twelve sous a volume, and the volume could not be detained beyond an hour. All classes shared the excitement, courtiers, soldiers, lawyers, and bour-

[1] Nowhere more pungently than in a little piece of some half-dozen pages, headed, *Prédiction tirée d'un vieux Manuscrit*, the form of which is borrowed from Grimm's squib in the dispute about French music, *Le petit Prophète de Bochmischbroda*, though it seems to me to be superior to Grimm in pointedness. Here are a few verses from the supposed prophecy of the man who should come—and of what he should do. 'Et la multitude courra sur ses pas et plusieurs croiront en lui. Et il leur dira : Vous êtes des scélérats et des fripons, vos femmes sont toutes des femmes perdues, et je viens vivre parmi vous. Et il ajoutera, tous les hommes sont vertueux dans le pays où je suis né, et je n'habiterai jamais le pays où je suis né. . . . . Et il dira aussi qu'il est impossible d'avoir des mœurs, et de lire des Romans, et il fera un Roman ; et dans son Roman le vice sera en action et la vertu en paroles, et ses personages seront forcenés d'amour et de philosophie. Et dans son Roman on apprendra l'art de suborner philosophiquement une jeune fille. Et l'Ecolière perdra toute honte et toute pudeur, et elle fera avec son maitre des sottises et des maximes. . . . Et le bel Ami étant dans un Bateau seul avec sa Maitresse voudra la jetter dans l'eau et se précipiter avec elle. Et ils appelleront tout cela de la Philosophie et de la Vertu,' and so on, humorously enough in this kind.

[2] See passages in Goncourt's *La Femme au 18ième siècle*, p. 380.

geois.[1] Stories were told of fine ladies, dressed for the ball, who took the book up for half-an-hour until the time should come for starting; who read until midnight, and when informed that the carriage waited answered not a word, and when reminded by-and-by that it was two o'clock still read on, and then at four, having ordered the horses to be taken out of the carriage, disrobed, went to bed, and passed the whole night in reading.[2] Gallantry was succeeded by passion, expansion, exaltation; moods far more dangerous for society, as all enthusiasm is dangerous, but also far higher, and pregnant with better hopes for character. To move the sympathetic faculties is the first step towards kindling all the other energies which make life wiser and more fruitful. It is especially worth noticing that nothing in the character of Julie concentrates this outburst of sympathy in subjective broodings. In Germany at that time and later there was a corresponding movement of sentimentalism, with its Order of Mercy and Expiation, its Order of Sentiment, and the like imbecilities. But this was only hysterical egoism disguised by transcendental shriekings. It was attended with the extreme of disorder in the relations between men and women, as such undirected sensational revivals always are, whether they are clothed in religious or philosophical forms. The effect of the New Heloïsa was just the opposite. Julie is the representative of one recalled to the straight path by practical, wholesome,

[1] Musset-Pathay, ii. 361. [2] *Conf.*, xi. 105.

objective sympathy for others, not of one expiring in unsatisfied yearnings for the sympathy of others for herself, and in moonstruck subjective aspirations. The women who wept over her romance read in it the lesson of duty, not of whimpering introspection. The danger lay in the mischievous intellectual direction which Rousseau imparted to this effusion.

The stir which the Julie communicated to the affections in so many ways, marked progress, but in all the elements of reason she was the most perilous of reactionaries. So hard is it with the human mind, constituted as it is, to march forward a space further to the light, without making some fresh swerve obliquely towards old darkness. The great effusion of natural sentiment was in the air before the New Heloïsa appeared, to condense, and turn it into definite channels. One beautiful character, Vauvenargues (1715—47), had begun to teach the culture of emotional instinct in some sayings of exquisite sweetness and moderation, as that 'Great thoughts come from the heart;' but he came too soon, and, alas for us all, he died young, and he made no mark. Moderation never can make a mark in the epochs when men are beginning to feel the urgent spirit of a new time. Diderot strove with more powerful efforts, in the midst of all his herculean labours for the acquisition and ordering of knowledge, in the same direction towards the great outer world of nature, and towards the great inner world of nature in the human breast.

His criticisms on the paintings of each year, mediocre as the paintings were, are admirable even now for their richness and freshness. His two plays drew tears as natural, as simple, as true, as any that have ever flowed under the magic stroke of an art enfranchised from convention. If he had been endowed with emotional tenacity, as he was with tenacity of understanding and of purpose, the student of the eighteenth century would probably have been spared the not perfectly agreeable task of threading a way along the sinuosities of the character and work of Rousseau. But Rousseau had what Diderot lacked—sustained ecstatic moods, and fervid trances; his literary gesture was so commanding, his apparel so glistening, his voice so rich in long-drawn notes of plangent vibration. His words are the words of a prophet; a prophet, it is understood, who had lived in Paris, and belonged to the eighteenth century, and wrote in French instead of Hebrew. The mischief of his work lay in this, that he raised feeling, now passionate, now quietist, into the supreme place, which it was to occupy alone, and not on an equal throne and in equal alliance with understanding. Instead of supplementing reason, he placed emotion as its substitute. And he made this evil doctrine come from the lips of a fictitious character, who stimulated fancy and fascinated imagination. Voltaire laughed at the 'baisers âcres' of madame de Wolmar, and declared that a criticism of the marquis of Ximénès had crushed the wretched

romance.[1] But madame de Wolmar was so far from crushed, that she turned the flood of feeling which her own charms, passion, remorse, and conversion had raised, in a direction that Voltaire abhorred, and abhorred in vain.

It is after the marriage of Julie to Wolmar that the action of the story takes the turn which sensible men like Voltaire found laughable. Saint Preux is absent with admiral Anson for some years. On his return to Europe he is speedily invited by the sage and unprejudiced Wolmar, who knows his past history perfectly well, to pay them a visit. They all meet with leapings on the neck and hearty kisses, the unprejudiced Wolmar preserving an open, serene, and smiling air. He takes his young friend to a chamber, which is to be reserved for him and for him only. In a few days he takes an opportunity of visiting some distant property, leaving his wife and Saint Preux together, with the sublime of magnanimity. At the same time he confides to Claire his intention of entrusting Saint Preux with the education of his children. All goes perfectly well, and the household presents a picture of contentment, prosperity, moderation, affection, and evenly diffused happiness, which in spite of the disagreeableness of the situation is even now extremely charming. There is only one cloud. Julie is devoured by a source of

[1] *Corr.*, Mar. 3, and Mar. 19, 1761. The criticisms of Ximénès, a thoroughly mediocre person in all respects, were entirely literary, and were directed against the too strained and highly coloured quality of the phrases, 'baisers âcres' among them.

hidden chagrin. Her husband, 'so sage, so reasonable, so far from every kind of vice, so little under the influence of human passions, is without the only belief that makes virtue precious, and in the innocence of an irreproachable life he carries at the bottom of his heart the frightful peace of the wicked.'[1] He is an atheist. Julie is now a pietist, locking herself for hours in her chamber, spending days in self-examination and prayer, constantly reading the pages of the good Fénélon.[2] 'I fear,' she writes to Saint Preux, 'that you do not gain all you might from religion in the conduct of your life, and that philosophic pride disdains the simplicity of the christian. You believe prayers to be of scanty service. That is not, you know, the doctrine of Saint Paul, nor what our church professes. We are free, it is true, but we are ignorant, feeble, prone to ill. And whence should light and force come, if not from him who is their very well-spring? . . . Let us be humble, to be sage; let us see our weakness, and we shall be strong.'[3] This was the opening of the deistical reaction; it was thus, associated with everything that struck imagination and moved the sentiment of his readers, that Rousseau brought back those sophistical conclusions which Pascal had drawn from premisses of dark profound truth, and that enervating displacement of reason by celestial contemplation, which Fénélon had once made beautiful by the persuasion of virtuous example. He was justified in

[1] *Nouv. Hél.*, V. v. 115. [2] VI. vii. [3] VI. vi.

saying, as he afterwards did, that there was nothing in the Savoyard Vicar's Profession of Faith which was not to be found in the letters of Julie. These were the effective preparations for that more famous manifesto; they surrounded belief with all the attractions of an interesting and sympathetic preacher, and set it to a harmony of circumstance that touched new and softer fibres.

For, curiously enough, while the first half of the romance is a scene of disorderly passion, the second is the glorification of the family. A modern writer of genius has inveighed with whimsical bitterness against the character of Wolmar,—supposed, we may notice in passing, to be partially drawn from D'Holbach,—a man performing so long an experiment on these two souls, with the terrible curiosity of a surgeon in vivisection.[1] It was, however, much less difficult for contemporaries to accept so unwholesome and prurient a situation, and they forgot all the evil that was in it, in the charm of the account of Wolmar's active, peaceful, frugal, sunny household. The influence of this was immense. We may be sure that Werther (1774) would not have found Charlotte cutting bread and butter if Saint Preux had not gone to see Julie take cream and cakes with her children and her female servants; and perhaps the other and nobler Charlotte of the *Wahlverwandtschaften* (1809) would not have detained us so long with her moss hut, her terrace, her park prospect, if Julie had not

[1] Michelet's *Louis XV. et Louis XVI.*, p. 58.

had her elysium, where the sweet freshness of the air, the cool shadows, the shining verdure, flowers diffusing fragrance and colour, water running with soft whisper, and the song of a thousand birds, reminded the returned traveller of Tinian and Juan Fernandez. There is an animation, a variety, an accuracy, a realistic brightness in this picture, which will always make it enchanting, even to those who cannot make their way through any other letter in the New Heloïsa,[1] and would seem to place it as an idyllic piece almost above even the clearest and freshest of such pieces in Goethe's two famous romances. There are other admirable landscapes, though not too many of them, and the minute and careful way in which Rousseau made their features real to himself, is accidentally shown in his urgent prayer for exactitude, in the engraving of the striking scene where Saint Preux and Julie visit the monuments of their old love for one another.[2] 'I have traversed all Rousseau's ground with the Heloïse before me,' said Byron, 'and am struck to a degree I cannot express with the force and accuracy of his descriptions and the beauty of their reality.'[3] They were memories made true by long dreaming, by endless brooding. The painter lived with these scenes ever present to the inner eye. They were his real world,

[1] IV. xi. [2] IV. xvii. See vol. iii. 423.

[3] In 1816. Moore's *Life*, iii. 247; also 285. And the note to the stanzas in the Third Canto,—a note curious for a slight admixture of transcendentalism, so rare a thing with Byron, who, sentimental though he was, usually rejoiced in a truly Voltairean common sense.

of which the tamer world of meadow and woodland actually around him only gave suggestion. He thought of the green steeps, the rocks, the mountain pines, the waters of the lake, 'the populous solitude of bees and birds,' as of some divine presence, too sublime for personality. And they were always benign, standing in relief with the malignity or folly of the insect, man. He was never a manichæan towards nature. To him she was all good and bounteous. The demon forces which so fascinated Byron, were to Rousseau invisible. These were the compositions that presently inspired the landscapes of *Paul and Virginia* (1788), of *Atala* and *René* (1801), and of *Obermann* (1804), as well as those punier imitators who resemble their masters, as the hymns of a methodist negro resemble the psalms of David. They were the outcome of eager and spontaneous feeling for nature, and not the mere hackneyed common form and inflated description of the literary pastoral.

This leads to another great and important distinction to be drawn between Rousseau and the school whom in other respects he inspired. The admirable Sainte Beuve perplexes one by his strange remark that the union of the poetry of the family and the hearth with the poetry of nature is essentially wanting to Rousseau.[1] It only shows that the great critic had for the moment forgotten the whole of the second half of the New Heloïsa, and his failure to identify Cowper's allusion to the *matinée à l'anglaise* certainly

[1] *Causeries*, xi. 195.

proves that he had at any rate forgotten one of the most striking and delicious scenes of the hearth in French literature.[1] The tendency to read Rousseau only in the Byronic sense is one of those foregone conclusions which are constantly tempting the critic to travel out of his record. He assuredly had a Byronic side, but he is just as often a Cowper done into splendid prose. His pictures are full of social animation and domestic order. He had exalted the simplicity of the savage state in his Discourses, but when he came to constitute an ideal life, he found it in a household that was more, and not less, systematically disciplined than those of the common society around him. The paradise in which his Julie moved with Wolmar and Saint Preux, was no more and no less than an establishment of the best kind of the rural middle-class, frugal, decorous, wholesome, tranquilly austere. No most sentimental savage could have found it endurable, or could himself without profound transformation of his manners have been endured in it. The New Heloïsa ends by exalting respectability, and putting the spirit of insurrection to shame. Self-control, not revolt, is its last word.

[1] *Nouv. Hél.*, V. iii. 'You remember Rousseau's description of an English morning: such are the mornings I spend with these good people.'—Cowper to Joseph Hill, Oct. 25, 1765. Works, iii. 269. In a letter to William Unwin (Sept. 21, 1779), speaking of his being engaged in mending windows, he says: 'Rousseau would have been charmed to have seen me so occupied, and would have exclaimed with rapture that he had found the Emilius who, he supposed, had subsisted only in his own idea.' For a description illustrative of the likeness between Rousseau and Cowper in their feeling for nature, see letter to Newton (Sept. 18, 1784, v. 78), and compare it with the description of Les Charmettes, making proper allowance for colour of prose.

This is what separates Rousseau, here and throughout, from Sénancour, Byron, and the rest. He consummates the triumph of will, while their reigning mood is grave or reckless protest against impotence of will, the little worth of common aims, the fretting triviality of common rules. Franklin or Cobbett might have gloried in the regularity of madame de Wolmar's establishment. The employment of the day was marked out with precision. By artful adjustment of pursuits it was contrived that the men servants should be kept apart from the maid servants except at their repasts. The women, namely, a cook, a housemaid, and a nurse, found their pastime in rambles with their mistress and her children, and lived mainly with them. The men were amused by games for which their master made regulated provision, now for summer, now for winter, offering prizes of a useful kind for prowess and adroitness. Often on a Sunday night all the household met in an ample chamber, and passed the evening in dancing. When Saint Preux inquired whether this was not a rather singular infraction of puritan rule, Julie wisely answered that pure morality is so loaded with severe duties, that if you add to them the further burden of indifferent forms, it must always be at the cost of the essential.[1] The servants were always taken from the country, never from the town. They entered the household young, were gradually trained, and never went away except to establish themselves.

[1] IV. x. 260.

The vulgar and obvious criticism on all this is that it is utopian, that such households do not generally exist, because neither masters nor servants possess the qualities needed to maintain these relations of unbroken order and friendliness. Perhaps not; and masters and servants will be more and more removed from the possession of such qualities, and their relations further distant from such order and friendliness, if writers cease to press the beauty and serviceableness of a domesticity that is at present only possible in a few rare cases, or to insist on the ugliness, the waste of peace, the deterioration of character, that are the results of our present system. Undoubtedly it is much easier for Rousseau to draw his picture of semi-patriarchal felicity, than for the rest of us to realise it. It was his function to press ideals of sweeter life on his contemporaries, and they may be counted fortunate in having a writer who could fulfil this function with Rousseau's peculiar force of masterly persuasion. His scornful diatribes against the domestic police of great houses, and the essential inhumanity of the ordinary household relations, are both excellent and of permanent interest. There is the full breath of a new humaneness in them. They were the right way of attacking the decrepitude of feudal luxury and insolence, and its imitation among the great farmers-general. This criticism of the conditions of domestic service marks a beginning of true democracy, as distinguished from the mere pulverisation of aristocracy. It rests on the claim

of the common people to an equal consideration, as equally useful and equally capable of virtue and vice; and it implies the essential priority of social over political reform.

The story abounds in sumptuary detail. The table partakes of the general plenty, but this plenty is not ruinous. The senses are gratified without daintiness. The food is common, but excellent of its kind. The service is simple, yet exquisite. All that is mere show, all that depends on vulgar opinion, all fine and elaborate dishes whose value comes of their rarity, and whose names you must know before finding any goodness in them, are banished without recall; and even in such delicacies as they permit themselves, they abstain every day from certain things which are reserved for feasts on special occasions, and which are thus made more delightful without being more costly. What do you suppose these delicacies are? Rare game, or fish from the sea, or dainties from abroad? Better than all that; some delicious vegetable of the district, one of the savoury things that grow in our garden, some fish from the lake dressed in a peculiar way, some cheese from our mountains. The service is modest and rustic, but clean and smiling. Neither gold-laced liveries in sight of which you die of hunger, nor tall crystals laden with flowers for your only dessert, here take the place of honest dishes; here they have not the art of nourishing the stomach through the eyes, but they know how to add grace to good cheer, to eat heartily without inconvenience, to

drink merrily without losing reason, to sit long at table without weariness, and always to rise from it without disgust.[1]

One singularity in this ideal household was the avoidance of those middle exchanges between production and consumption, which enrich the shopkeeper but impoverish his customers. Not one of these exchanges is made without loss, and the multiplication of these losses would weaken even a man of fortune. Wolmar seeks those real exchanges in which the convenience of each party to the bargain serves as profit for both. Thus the wool is sent to the factories, from which they receive cloth in exchange; wine, oil, and bread, are produced in the house; the butcher pays himself in live cattle; the grocer receives grain in return for his goods; the wages of the labourers and the house-servants are derived from the produce of the land which they render valuable.[2] It was reserved for Fourier, Cabet, and the rest, to carry to its highest point this confusion of what is so fascinating in a book, with what is practicable in society.

The expatiation on the loveliness of a well-ordered interior may strike the impatient modern as somewhat long, and the movement as very slow, just as people complain of the same things in the Elective Affinities. Such complaint only proves inability, which is or is not justifiable, to seize the spirit of the writer. The expatiation was long and the movement slow, because Rousseau was full of his thoughts; they were a deep

[1] V. ii. 37. [2] V. ii. 47—52.

and glowing part of himself, and did not only skim swiftly and lightly through his mind. Anybody who takes the trouble may find out the difference between this expression of long mental brooding, and a merely elaborated diction.[1] The length is an essential part of the matter. The whole work is the reflection of a series of slow inner processes, the many careful weavings of a lonely and miserable man's dreams. And Julie expressed the spirit and the joy of these dreams when she wrote, 'People are only happy before they are happy. Man, so eager and so feeble, made to desire all and obtain little, has received from heaven a consoling force which brings all that he desires close to him, which subjects it to his imagination, which makes it present and sensible to him, which delivers it over to him. The land of chimera is the only one in this world that is worth dwelling in, and such is the nothingness of the human lot, that except the being who exists in and by himself, there is nothing beautiful except that which does not exist.'[2]

Closely connected with the vigorous attempt to fascinate his public with the charm of a serene, joyful, and ordered house, is the restoration of marriage in the New Heloïsa to a rank among high and honourable obligations, and its representation as the best support of an equable life of right conduct and fruitful harmonious emotion. He even invested it with the

[1] Rousseau considered that the Fourth and Sixth parts of the New Heloïsa were masterpieces of diction. *Conf.*, ix. 334.

[2] VI. viii., 298. *Conf.*, xi. 106.

mysterious dignity as of some natural sacrament. 'This chaste knot of nature is subject neither to the sovereign power nor to paternal authority,' he cried, 'but only to the authority of the common father,' and he pointed his remark by a bitter allusion to a celebrated case in which a great house had procured the nullification by the courts of the marriage of an elder son with a young actress, whose character was excellent, and who had befriended him when he was abandoned by everybody else.[1] This was one of the countless democratic thrusts in the book. In the case of its heroine, however, he associated the sanctity of marriage, not only with equality, but with religion. We may imagine the spleen with which the philosophers, with both their hatred of the faith and their light esteem of marriage bonds, read Julie's eloquent account of her emotions at the moment of her union with Wolmar. 'I seemed to behold the organ of providence and to hear the voice of god, as the minister gravely pronounced the words of the holy service. The purity, the dignity, the sanctity of marriage, so vividly set forth in the words of scripture, its chaste and sublime duties, so important to the happiness, order, and peace of the human race, so sweet to fulfil even for their own sake—all this made such an impression on me that I seemed to feel within my breast a sudden revolution. An unknown power seemed all at once to arrest the disorder of my affections, and to restore them in accordance with the

[1] The La Bédoyère case, which began in 1745. See Barbier, iv. 54, 59, etc.

law of duty and of nature. The eternal eye that sees everything, I said to myself, now reads to the depth of my heart,' and so forth.[1] She has all the well-known fervour of the proselyte, and never wearies of extolling the peace of the wedded state. Love is no essential to its perfection. 'Worth, virtue, a certain accord not so much in condition and age as in character and temper, are enough between husband and wife; and this does not prevent the growth from such a union of a very tender attachment, which is none the less sweet for not being exactly love, and is all the more lasting.'[2] Years after, when Saint Preux has returned and is settled in the household, she even tries to persuade him to imitate her example, and find contentment in marriage with her cousin. The earnestness with which she presses the point, the very sensible but not very delicate references to the hygienic drawbacks of celibacy, and the fact that the cousin whom she would fain have him marry, had complaisantly assisted them in their past loves, naturally drew the fire of Rousseau's critical enemies. Such matters did not affect the general enthusiasm. When people are weary of a certain way of surveying life, and have their faces eagerly set in some new direction, they read in a book what it pleases them to read; they assimilate as much as falls in with their

[1] III. xviii. 84.

[2] III. xx. 116. In the letter to Christopher de Beaumont (p. 102), he fires a double shot against the philosophers on the one hand, and the church on the other; exalting continence and purity, of which the philosophers in their reaction against asceticism thought lightly, and exalting marriage over the celibate state which the churchmen associated with mysterious sanctity.

dominant mood, and the rest passes away unseen. The French public were bewitched by Julie, and were no more capable of criticising her, than Julie was capable of criticising Saint Preux in the height of her passion for him. When we say that Rousseau was the author of this movement, all we mean is that his book and its chief personage awoke emotion to self-consciousness, gave it a dialect, communicated an impulse in favour of social order, and very calamitously at the same moment divorced it from the fundamental conditions of progress, by divorcing it from disciplined intelligence and scientific reason.

Apart from the general tendency of the New Heloïsa in numberless indirect ways to bring the manners of the great into contempt by the presentation of the happiness of a simple and worthy life, thrifty, self-sufficing and homely, there is one direct protest of singular eloquence and gravity. Julie's father is deeply revolted at the bare notion of marrying his daughter to a teacher. Rousseau puts his vigorous remonstrance against pride of birth into the mouth of an English nobleman, an infelicitous piece of prosopopœia, which is interesting as illustrative of the eighteenth century idea of England as the home of stout-hearted freedom. We may quote one piece from the numerous bits of very straightforward speaking in which our representative expressed his mind as to the significance of birth. 'My friend has nobility,' cried lord Edward, 'not written in ink on mouldering parchments, but graven in his

heart in characters that can never be effaced. For my own part, by god, I should be sorry to have no other proof of my merit but that of a man who has been in his grave these five hundred years. If you know the English nobility, you know that it is the most enlightened, the best informed, the wisest, the bravest in Europe. That being so, I don't care to ask whether it is the oldest or not. We are not, it is true, the slaves of the prince, but his friends; nor the tyrants of the people, but their leaders. We hold the balance true between people and monarch. Our first duty is towards the nation, our second towards him who governs; it is not his will but his right that we consider. . . We suffer no one in the land to say *God and my sword*, nor more than this, *God and my right*.'[1] All this was putting Montesquieu into heroics, but a great many people read the romance who were not likely to read the graver book, and there was a wide difference between the calm statement of a number of political propositions about government, and their transformation into dramatic invective against the arrogance of a social inequality that does not correspond with inequalities of worth.

There is no contradiction between this and what may be called the social quietism of other parts of the book. Moral considerations and the paramount place they hold in Rousseau's way of thinking, explain at once his contempt for the artificial privileges and assumptions of high rank, and his contempt for anything

[1] I. lxii.

like discontent with the conditions of humble rank. Simplicity of life was his ideal. He wishes us to despise both those who have departed from it, and those who would depart from it if they could. So Julie does her best to make the lot of the peasants as happy as it is capable of being made, without ever helping them to change it for another. She teaches them to respect their natural condition in respecting themselves. Her prime maxim is to discourage change of station and calling, but above all to dissuade the villager, whose life is the happiest of all, from leaving the true pleasures of his natural career for the fever and corruption of towns.[1] Presently a recollection of the sombre things he had seen in his rambles through France crossed Rousseau's pastoral visions, and he admitted that there were some lands in which the publican devours the fruits of the earth, where the misery that covers the fields, the bitter greed of some grasping farmer, the inflexible rigour of an inhuman master, take something from the charm of his rural scenes. 'Worn out horses ready to expire under the blows they receive, wretched peasants attenuated by hunger, broken by weariness, clad in rags, hamlets all in ruins —these things offer a mournful spectacle to the eye; one is almost sorry to be a man, as we think of the unhappy creatures on whose blood we have to feed.'[2]

Yet there is no hint in the New Heloïsa of the socialism which Morelly and Mably flung themselves upon, as the remedy for all these desperate horrors.

[1] V. ii.

[2] V. vii. 141.

Property is held in full respect; the master has the honourable burden of patriarchal duty; the servant the not less honourable burden of industry and faithfulness; disobedience or vice is promptly punished with paternal rigour and more than paternal inflexibility. The insurrectionary quality and effect of Rousseau's work lay in no direct preaching or vehement denunciation of the abuses that filled France with cruelty on the one hand, and sodden misery on the other. It lay in pictures of a social state in which abuses and cruelty cannot exist, nor any miseries save those which are inseparable from humanity. The contrast between the sober, cheerful, prosperous scenes of romance, and the dreariness of the reality of the field life of France,—this was the element that filled generous souls with an intoxicating transport.

Rousseau's way of dealing with the portentous questions that lay about that tragic scene of deserted fields, ruined hamlets, tottering brutes, and hunger-stricken men, may be gathered from one of the many traits in Julie which endeared her to that generation, and might even to our own if they only knew her. Wolmar's house was near a great highroad, and so was daily haunted by beggars. Not one of these was allowed to go empty away. And Julie had as many excellent reasons to give for her charity, as if she had been one of the philosophers of whom she thought so surpassingly ill. If you look at mendicancy merely as a trade, what is the harm of a calling whose end is to nourish feelings of humanity and brotherly love?

From the point of view of talent, why should I not pay the eloquence of a beggar who stirs my pity, as highly as that of a player who makes me shed tears over imaginary sorrows? If the great number of beggars is burdensome to the state, of how many other professions that people encourage, may you not say the same? How can I be sure that the man to whom I give an alms is not an honest soul whom I may save from perishing? In short, whatever we may think of the poor wretches, if we owe nothing to the beggar, at least we owe it to ourselves to pay honour to suffering humanity or to its image.[1] Nothing could be more admirably illustrative of the author's confidence that the first thing for us to do is to satisfy our fine feelings, and that then all the rest shall be added unto us. The doctrine spread so far that Necker,—a sort of Julie in coat and trousers who had never fallen, the incarnation of this doctrine on the great stage of affairs,—was hailed to power to ward off the bankruptcy of the state by means of a good heart and moral sentences, while Turgot with science and firmness for his resources was driven away as an economist and a philosopher.

At a first glance, it may seem that there was compensation for the triumph of sentiment over reason, and that if France was ruined by the dreams in which Rousseau encouraged the nation to exult, she was saved by the fervour and resoluteness of the aspirations with which he filled the most generous of

[1] V. ii. 31—3.

her children. No wide movement, we may be sure, is thoroughly understood until we have mastered both its material and its ideal sides. Materially, Rousseau's work was inevitably fraught with confusion, because in this sphere not to be scientific, not to be careful in tracing effects to their true causes, is to be without any security that the causes with which we try to deal, will lead to the effects we desire. A Roman statesman who had gone to the sermon on the mount for a method of staying the economic ruin of the empire, its thinning population, its decreasing capital, would obviously have found nothing of what he sought. But the moral nature of man is redeemed by teaching that may have no bearing on economics, or even a bearing purely mischievous, and which has to be corrected by teaching that probably goes equally far in the contrary direction of moral mischief. In the ideal sphere, the processes are very complex, and in measuring a man's influence within it we have to balance. Rousseau's action was undoubtedly excellent in leading men and women to desire simple lives, and a more harmonious social order. Was this eminent benefit more than counterbalanced by the eminent disadvantage of giving a reactionary intellectual direction, and commending irrational retrogression from active use of the understanding to dreamy contemplation? The question can only be answered by those who feel themselves in a position to answer the larger question, whether the moral benefits of the first French revolution have counterbalanced

the disadvantages to France and Europe of its shallow, hasty, and inefficient methods. To one teacher is usually only one task allotted. We do not reproach want of science to the virtuous and benevolent Channing, whose goodness and effusion stirred women and the young, just as Rousseau did, to sentimental but humane aspiration. It was this kind of influence that formed the opinion which at last destroyed American slavery. We owe a place in the temple that commemorates human emancipation, to every man who has kindled in his generation a brighter flame of moral enthusiasm, and a more eager care for the realisation of good and virtuous ideals.

III.

The story of the circumstances of the publication of Emilius and the persecution which befel its author in consequence, recalls us to the distinctively evil side of French history in this critical epoch, and carries us away from light into the thick darkness of political intrigue, obscurantist faction, and a misgovernment which was at once tyrannical and decrepit. It is almost impossible for us to realise the existence in the same society of such boundless licence of thought and such unscrupulous restraint upon its expression. Not one of Rousseau's three chief works, for instance, was printed in France. The whole trade in books was a sort of contraband, and was carried on with the stealth, subterfuge, daring, and knavery, that always mark contraband dealings. An author or a book-

seller was forced to be as careful as a kidnapper of coolies or the captain of a slaver would be in our own time. He had to steer clear of the court, of the parliament, of Jansenists, of Jesuits, of the mistresses of the king and the minister, of the friends of the mistresses, and above all of the organized hierarchy of ignorance, insolence, and oppression in all times and places where they raise their masked heads, the bishops and ecclesiastics of every sort and condition. Palissot produced his comedy to please the devout at the expense of the philosophers (1760). Madame de Robecq, daughter of Rousseau's marshal of Luxembourg, instigated and protected him, for Diderot had offended her. Morellet replied in a piece in which the keen vision of feminine spite detected a reference to madame de Robecq. Though dying, she still had relations with Choiseul, and so Morellet was flung into the Bastile.[1] Diderot was thrown for three months into Vincennes, where we saw him on a memorable occasion, for his Letter on the Blind (1748), nominally because it was held to contain irreligious doctrine, really because he had given offence to D'Argenson's mistress by hinting that she might be very handsome, but that her judgment on scientific experiment was of no value.[2]

The New Heloïsa could not circulate in France so long as it contained the words—'I would rather be

[1] Morellet's *Mém.*, i. 89—93. Rousseau, *Conf.*, x. 85, etc. This *Vision* is also in the style of Grimm's *Petit Prophète*, like the piece referred to in a previous note, p. 31.

[2] Madame de Vandeul's *Mém. sur Diderot*, p. 27. Rousseau, *Conf.*, vii. 130.

the wife of a charcoal-burner than the mistress of a king.' The last word was altered to 'prince,' and then Rousseau was warned that he would offend the prince de Conti and madame de Boufflers.[1] No work of merit could appear without more or less of mutilation, and no amount of mutilation could make the writer secure against the accidental grudge of people who had influence in high quarters. Such truncation of books reached an almost tragical pitch in the case of the Encyclopædia, and even then the unfortunate but indomitable Diderot had to confront as many dangers and overcome as many difficulties as the hero of an epic poem.

If a French bookseller in the stirring intellectual time of the eighteenth century needed all the craft of a smuggler, his morality was reduced to an equally low level in dealing not only with the police, but with his accomplice, the book-writer. They excused themselves from paying proper sums to their authors on the ground that they were robbed of the profits that would enable them to pay such sums, by the piracy of their brethren in trade. But then they all pirated the works of one another. The whole commerce was a mass of fraud and chicane, and every prominent author passed his life between two fires. He was robbed, his works were pirated, and in the piracy they were defaced and distorted, by the booksellers. On the other side he was tormented to death by the suspicion and timidity, alternately with the hatred and active

[1] *Nouv. Hél.*, V. xiii. 194. *Conf.*, x. 43.

tyranny, of the administration. As we read the story of the lives of all these strenuous men, their struggles, their incessant mortifications, their constantly reviving and ever irrepressible vigour and interest in the fight, we may wish that the shabbiness and the pettiness of the daily lives of some of them had faded away from memory, and left us nothing to think of in connection with their names, but the alertness, courage, tenacity, self-sacrifice, and faith, with which they defended the cause of human emancipation and progress. Happily the mutual hate of the christian factions, to which liberty owes at least as much as charity owes to their mutual love, prevented a common union for burning the philosophers as well as their books. All torments short of this they endured, and they had the great merit of enduring them without any hope of being rewarded after their death, as truly good men are always capable of doing.

Rousseau had no taste for martyrdom, nor any intention of courting it in even its slightest forms. Holland was now the great printing press of France, and when we are counting up the contributions of protestantism to the enfranchisement of Europe, it is just to remember the indispensable services rendered by the freedom of the press in Holland to the dissemination of French thought in the eighteenth century, as well as the shelter they gave to the French thinkers in the seventeenth, including the greatest of them all. The monstrous tediousness of printing a book at Amsterdam or the Hague, the delay, loss,

and confusion in receiving and transmitting the proofs, and the subterranean character of the entire process, including the circulation of the book after it was once fairly printed, were as grievous to Rousseau as to authors of more impetuous temper. He agreed with Rey, for instance, the Amsterdam printer, to sell him the Social Contract for 1,000 francs. The manuscript had then to be cunningly conveyed to Amsterdam. Rousseau wrote it out in very small characters, sealed it carefully up, and entrusted it to the care of the chaplain of the Dutch embassy, who happened to be a native of Vaud. In passing the barrier, the packet fell into the hands of the officials. They tore it open and examined it, happily unconscious that they were handling the most explosive kind of gunpowder that they had ever meddled with. It was not until the chaplain claimed it in the name of ambassadorial privilege, that the manuscript was allowed to go on its way to the press.[1] Rousseau repeats a hundred times not only in the Confessions, but also in letters to his friends, how resolutely and carefully he avoided any evasion of the laws of the country in which he lived. The French government was anxious enough on all grounds to secure for France the production of the books of which France was the great consumer, but the severity of its censorship prevented this.[2] The introduction of the books, when printed, was tolerated or connived at, because the country would hardly have

[1] *Conf.*, xi. 127.

[2] See a letter from Rousseau to Malesherbes, Nov. 5, 1760. *Corr.*, ii. 157.

endured to be deprived of the enjoyment of its own literature. By a greater inconsistency the reprinting of a book which had once found admission into the country, was also connived at. Thus M. de Malesherbes out of friendship for Rousseau wished to have an edition of the New Heloïsa printed in France, and sold for the benefit of the author. That he should have done so is a curious illustration of the low morality engendered by a repressive system imperfectly carried out. Rousseau had sold the book to Rey. Rey had treated with a French bookseller in the usual way, that is, had sent him half the edition printed, the bookseller paying either in cash or other books for all the copies he received. Therefore to print an independent edition in Paris was to injure, not Rey, the foreigner, but the French bookseller who stood practically in Rey's place. It was setting two French booksellers to ruin one another. Rousseau emphatically declined to receive any profit from such a transaction. But, said Malesherbes, you sold to Rey a right which you had not got, the right of sole proprietorship, excluding the competition of a pirated reprint. Then, answered Rousseau, if the right which I sold, happens to prove less than I thought, it is clear that, far from taking advantage of my mistake, I owe Rey compensation for the loss which he may suffer.[1]

The friendship of Malesherbes for the party of reason was shown on numerous occasions. As director of the book trade he was really the censor of the

[1] Ibid.

literature of the time.[1] The story of his service to Diderot is well known—how he warned Diderot that the police were about to visit his house and overhaul his papers, and how when Diderot despaired of being able to put them out of sight in his narrow quarters, Malesherbes said, 'Then send them all to me,' and took care of them until the storm was overpast. The proofs of the New Heloïsa came through his hands, and now he made himself Rousseau's agent in the affairs relative to the printing of Emilius. Rousseau entrusted the whole matter to him and to madame de Luxembourg, being confident that acting through persons of such authority and position, he should be protected against any unwitting illegality. Instead of being sent to Rey, the manuscript was sold to a bookseller in Paris for six thousand francs.[2] A long time elapsed before any proofs reached him, and he soon perceived that an edition was being printed in France as well as in Holland. Still, as Malesherbes was in some sort the director of the enterprise, the author felt no alarm. Duclos came to visit him one

[1] C. G. de Lamoignon de Malesherbes (b. 1721—guillotined, 1794), son of the chancellor, and one of the best instructed and most enlightened men of the century,—a Turgot of the second rank—was Directeur de la Librairie from 1750—63. The process was this: a book was submitted to him; he named a censor for it; on the censor's report the director gave or refused permission to print, or required alterations. Even after these formalities were complied with, the book was liable to a decree of the royal council, a decree of the parliament, or else a lettre-de-cachet might send the author to the Bastile.

After Lord Shelburne saw Malesherbes, he said, 'I have seen for the first time in my life what I never thought could exist—a man whose soul is absolutely free from hope or fear, and yet who is full of life and ardour' (Mdlle. l'Espinasse's *Letters*, ii. 90).

[2] See note to vol. i. p. 203.

day, and Rousseau read aloud to him the Savoyard Vicar's Profession of Faith. 'What, citizen,' he cried, 'and that is part of a book that they are printing at Paris! Be kind enough not to tell any one that you read this to me.'[1] Rousseau remained secure. Then the printing came to a standstill, and he could not find out the reason, because Malesherbes was away, and the printer did not take the trouble to answer his letters. 'My natural tendency,' he says, and as the rest of his life only too abundantly proved, 'is to be afraid of darkness; mystery always disturbs me, it is so antipathetic to my character which is open, even to the pitch of imprudence. The aspect of the most hideous monster would alarm me little, I verily believe; but if I discern at night a figure in a white cloth, I am sure to be terrified.'[2] So he at once fancied that by some means the Jesuits had got possession of his book, and knowing him to be at death's door, designed to keep the Emilius back until he was actually dead, when they would publish a truncated version of it to suit their own purposes.[3] He wrote letter upon letter to the printer, to Malesherbes, to madame de Luxembourg, and if answers did not come, or did not come exactly when he expected them, he confesses that he grew delirious with anxiety. If he dropped his conviction that the Jesuits were plotting the ruin of his book and the defilement of his reputation, he lost no time in fastening a similar design upon the

[1] *Conf.*, xi. 134. [2] Ib., 138.
[3] Ib., 139. *Corr.*, ii. 270, etc. Dec. 12, 1761, etc.

Jansenists, and when the Jansenists were acquitted, then the turn of the philosophers came. We have constantly to remember that all this time the wretched man was suffering incessant pain, and passing his nights in sleeplessness and fever. He sometimes threw off the black dreams of unfathomable suspicion, and dreamed in their stead of some sunny spot in pleasant Touraine, where under a mild climate and among a gentle people he should peacefully end his days.[1] At other times he was fond of supposing M. de Luxembourg not a duke, nor a marshal of France, but a good country squire living in some old mansion, and himself not an author, not a maker of books, but with moderate intelligence and slight attainment, finding with the squire and his dame the happiness of his life, and contributing to the happiness of theirs.[2] Alas, in spite of all his precautions, he had unwittingly drifted into the stream of great affairs; he and his book were sacrificed to the exigencies of faction; and a persecution set in, which destroyed his last chance of a composed life, by giving his reason, already disturbed, a final blow from which it never recovered.

Emilius appeared in the crisis of the movement against the Jesuits. That formidable order had offended madame de Pompadour by a refusal to recognise her power and position, which was as creditable to their moral vigour as it was contrary to the maxims which had made them powerful. They had also offended Choiseul by the part they had taken

[1] *Conf.*, xi. 150. [2] Fourth Letter to Malesherbes, p. 377.

in certain hostile intrigues at Versailles. The parliaments had always been their enemies, first from the jealousy with which corporations of lawyers always regard corporations of ecclesiastics, next from their hatred of the bull Unigenitus, which had been not only an infraction of French liberties, but the occasion of special humiliation to the parliaments, and lastly from the harshness with which the system of confessional tickets was being carried out. Finally, the once powerful house of Austria, the protector of all retrograde interests, was now weakened by the Seven Years' War, and was unable to bring effective influence to bear on Lewis XV., who at last gave his consent to the destruction of the order. The commercial bankruptcy of one of their missions was the immediate occasion of their fall, and nothing could save them. 'I only know one man,' said Grimm, 'in a position to have composed an apology for the Jesuits in fine style, if it had been in his way to take the side of that race; and this man is M. Rousseau.' The parliaments went to work with alacrity, but they were quite as hostile to the philosophers as they were to the Jesuits, and hence their anxiety to show that they were not the allies of the one in destroying the other.

Contemporaries seldom criticise the shades and variations of innovating speculation with any marked nicety. Anything with the stamp of rationality on its phrases or arguments was roughly set down to the school of the philosophers, and Rousseau was counted one of their number, like Voltaire or Helvétius. The

Emilius appeared in May, 1762. On the 11th of June the parliament of Paris ordered the book to be burnt by the public executioner, and the writer to be arrested. For Rousseau always scorned the devices of Voltaire and others, and courageously insisted on placing his name on the title-page of all his works,[1] and so there was none of the usual difficulty in identifying the author. The grounds of the proceedings were alleged irreligious tendencies to be found in the book.[2]

The indecency of the requisition in which the advocate-general demanded its proscription, was admitted by people who were least likely to defend Rousseau.[3] The author was charged with saying not only that man may be saved without believing in god, but even that the christian religion does not exist—a paradox too flagrant even for the writer of the Discourse on Inequality. No evidence was produced either that the alleged assertions were in the book, or that the name of the author was really the name on its title-page. Rousseau fared no worse, but better, than his fellows, for there was hardly a single man of letters of that time who escaped arbitrary imprisonment.

The unfortunate author had news of the ferment which his work was creating in Paris, and received

[1] With one trifling exception, the Letter to Grimm on the Opera of Omphale (1752): *Ecrits sur la Musique*, p. 337.

[2] See Barbier's Journal, viii. 45 (Ed. Charpentier, 1857). A succinct contemporary account of the general situation is to be found in D'Alembert's little book, the *Destruction des Jésuites*.

[3] Grimm, for instance: *Corr. Lit.*, iii. 117.

notes of warning from every hand, but he could not believe that the only man in France who believed in god was to be the victim of the defenders of christianity.[1] On the 8th of June he spent a merry day with two friends, taking their dinner in the fields. 'Ever since my youth I had a habit of reading at night in my bed until my eyes grew heavy. Then I put out the candle, and tried to fall asleep for a few minutes, but they seldom lasted long. My ordinary reading at night was the bible, and I have read it continuously through at least five or six times in this way. That night, finding myself more wakeful than usual, I prolonged my reading, and read through the whole of the book which ends with the Levite of Ephraim, and which if I mistake not is the book of Judges. The story affected me deeply, and I was busy over it in a kind of dream, when all at once I was roused by lights and noises.'[2]

It was two o'clock in the morning. A messenger had come in hot haste to carry him to madame de Luxembourg. News had reached her of the proposed decree of the parliament. She knew Rousseau well enough to be sure that if he were seized and examined, her own share and that of Malesherbes in the production of the condemned book would be made public, and their position uncomfortably compromised. It was to their interest that he should avoid arrest by flight, and they had no difficulty in persuading him

[1] *Corr.*, ii. 337. June 7, 1762. *Conf.*, xi. 152, 162.
[2] *Conf.*, xi. 163.

to fall in with their plans. After a tearful farewell with Theresa, who had hardly been out of his sight for seventeen years, and many embraces from the greater ladies of the castle, he was thrust into a chaise and despatched on the first stage of eight melancholy years of wandering and despair, driven from place to place, first by the fatuous tyranny of magistrates and religious doctors, and then by the yet more cruel spectres of his own diseased imagination, until at length his whole soul became the home of weariness and torment.

CHAPTER XI.

PERSECUTION.[1]

THOSE to whom life consists in the immediate consciousness of their own direct relations with the people and circumstances that are in close contact with them, find it hard to follow the moods of a man to whom such consciousness is the least part of himself, and such relations the least real part of his life. Rousseau was no sooner in the post-chaise which was bearing him away towards Switzerland, than the troubles of the previous day at once dropped into a pale and distant past, and he returned to a world where was neither parliament nor decree for burning books nor any warrant for personal arrest. He took up the thread where harassing circumstances had broken it, and again fell musing over the tragic fate of the Levite of Ephraim. His dream absorbed him so entirely as to take specific literary form, and before the journey was at an end he had composed a long impassioned version of the bible story, which no man now reads, but for which the author himself always

[1] June, 1762—December, 1765.

preserved a certain tenderness.[1] The contrast between this singular quietism and the angry stir which marked Voltaire's many flights in post-chaises, points like all else to the profound difference between the pair. Contrast with Voltaire's shrill cries, this calm utterance:—'Though the consequences of this affair have plunged me into a gulf of woes from which I shall never come up again so long as I live, I bear these gentlemen no grudge. I am aware that their object was not to do me any harm, but only to reach ends of their own. I know that towards me they have neither liking nor hate. I was found in their way, like a pebble which you thrust aside with the foot without even looking at it. They ought not to say they have performed their duty, but that they have done their business.'[2] Here was a new note from a persecuted writer.

Rousseau, in spite of the belief which henceforth possessed him that he was the victim of a dark unfathomable plot, and in spite of passing outbreaks of gloomy rage, was incapable of steady glowing and active resentments. The world was not real enough to him for this. A throng of phantoms pressed noiselessly before his sight, and dulled all sense of more actual impression. 'It is amazing,' he wrote, 'with what ease I forget past ill, however fresh it may be. In proportion as the anticipation of it alarms and confuses me when I see it coming, so the memory of it returns feebly to my mind and dies out the moment

[1] *Conf.*, xi. 175. [2] *Corr.*, iii. 416.

after it has arrived. My cruel imagination, which torments itself incessantly in anticipating woes that are still unborn, makes a diversion for my memory, and hinders me from recalling those which have gone. I exhaust disaster beforehand. The more I have suffered in foreseeing it, the more easily do I forget it; while on the contrary, being incessantly busy with my past happiness, I recall it and ruminate over it, so as to enjoy it over again whenever I wish.'[1] The same turn of humour saved him from vindictiveness. 'I concern myself too little with the offence, to feel much concern about the offender. I only think of the hurt I have received from him, on account of the hurt which he may still do me, and if I were sure he would do me no more, what he had already done would be straightway forgotten.' Though he does not carry the analysis any further, we may easily perceive that the same explanation covers what he called his natural ingratitude. Kindness was not much more vividly understood by him than malice was. It was only one form of the troublesome interposition of an outer world in his life, from which he was fain to hurry back to the real world of his dreams. If any man called practical is tempted to despise this dreaming creature faring in his chaise from stage to stage, let him remember that one making that journey through France less than thirty years later might have seen the castles of the great flaring in the destruction of a most righteous vengeance, the great themselves fleeing

[1] *Conf.*, xi. 172.

ignobly from the land to which their presence, their selfishness, and heedlessness, and hatred of improvement, and inhuman pride had been a curse, while the legion of toilers with eyes blinded by the oppression of ages were groping with passionate uncertain hand for that divine something which they thought of as justice and right. And this was what Rousseau both partially foresaw and largely prepared,[1] while the common politicians, like Choiseul or d'Aiguillon, played their poor game—the elemental forces rising unseen into tempest around them.

He reached the territory of the canton of Berne, and alighted at the house of an old friend at Yverdun,[2] where native air, the beauty of the spot, and the charms of the season, immediately repaired all weariness and fatigue.[3] Friends at Geneva wrote letters of sincere feeling, joyful that he had not followed the precedent of Socrates too closely by remaining in the power of a government eager to destroy him.[4] A post or two later brought worse news. The council at Geneva ordered not only Emilius, but the Social Contract also, to be publicly burnt, and issued a warrant of arrest against their author, if he should set foot in the territory of the republic (June 19).[5] Rousseau could hardly believe it possible that the free government which he had held up to the reverence of

[1] For a remarkable anticipation of the ruin of France, see *Conf.*, xi. 136.

[2] M. Roguin. June 14, 1762.

[3] *Corr.*, ii. 347.

[4] Streckeisen, i. 35.

[5] His friend Moultou wrote him the news. Streckeisen, i. 43. Geneva was the only place at which the Social Contract was burnt. Here there were peculiar reasons, as we shall see.

Europe could have condemned him unheard, but he took occasion in a highly characteristic manner to chide severely a friend at Geneva who had publicly taken his part.[1] Within a fortnight this blow was followed by another. His two books were reported to the senate of Berne, and Rousseau was informed by one of the authorities that a notification was on its way admonishing him to quit the canton within the space of fifteen days.[2] This stroke he avoided by flight to Motiers, a village in the principality of Neuchâtel (July 10), then part of the dominions of the king of Prussia.[3] Rousseau had some antipathy to Frederick, both because he had beaten the French, whom Rousseau loved, and because his maxims and his conduct alike seemed to trample under foot respect for the natural law and many human duties. He had composed a verse to the effect that Frederick thought like a philosopher, and acted like a king, philosopher and king notoriously being words of equally evil sense in his dialect. There was also a passage in Emilius about Adrastus, king of the Dau-

[1] *Corr.*, ii. 356. [2] *Corr.*, ii. 358, 369, etc.

[3] The principality of Neuchâtel had fallen by marriage (1504) to the French house of Orleans-Longueville, which with certain interruptions retained it until the extinction of the line by the death of Marie, duchess of Nemours (1707). Fifteen claimants arose with fifteen varieties of far-off title, as well as a party for constituting Neuchâtel a republic and making it a fourteenth canton. The Estates adjudged the sovereignty to the protestant house of Prussia (Nov. 3, 1707). Lewis XIV, as heir of the pretensions of the extinct line, protested. Finally, at the peace of Utrecht (1713), Lewis surrendered his claim in exchange for the cession by Prussia of the principality of Orange, and Prussia held it until 1806. The disturbed history of the connection between Prussia and Neuchâtel from 1814, when it became the twenty-first canton of the Swiss confederation, down to 1857, does not here concern us.

nians, which was commonly understood to mean Frederick, king of the Prussians. Still Rousseau was acute enough to know that mean passions usually only rule the weak, and have little hold over the strong. He boldly wrote both to the king, and to lord Marischal, the governor of the principality, informing them that he was there, and asking permission to remain in the only asylum left for him upon the earth.[1] He compared himself loftily to Coriolanus among the Volscians, and wrote to the king in a vein that must have amused the strong man. 'I have said much ill of you, perhaps I shall still say more; yet driven from France, from Geneva, from the canton of Berne, I am come to seek shelter in your states. Perhaps I was wrong in not beginning there; this is eulogy of which you are worthy. Sire, I have deserved no grace from you, and I seek none, but I thought it my duty to inform your majesty that I am in your power, and that I am so of design. Your majesty will dispose of me as shall seem good to you.'[2] Frederick, though no admirer of Rousseau or his writings,[3] readily granted the required permission. He also, says lord Marischal, 'gave me orders to furnish him his small necessaries if he would accept them; and though that king's philosophy be very different from that of Jean Jacques, yet he does not think that a man of an irreproachable life is to be persecuted because his sentiments are

[1] *Corr.*, ii. 370.

[2] *Corr.*, ii. 371. July, 1762.

[3] D'Alembert, who knew Frederick better than any of the philosophers, to Voltaire, Nov. 22, 1765.

singular. He designs to build him a hermitage with a little garden, which I find he will not accept, nor perhaps the rest, which I have not yet offered him.'[1] When the offer of the flour, wine, and firewood was at length made in as delicate terms as possible,[2] Rousseau declined the gift on grounds which may raise a smile, but which are not without a rather touching simplicity. 'I have enough to live on for two or three years,' he said, 'but if I were dying of hunger, I would rather, in the present condition of your good prince, and not being of any service to him, go and eat grass and grub up roots, than accept a morsel of bread from him.'[3] Hume might well call this a phenomenon in the world of letters, and one very honourable for the person concerned;[4] and we recognise its dignity the more when we contrast it with the baseness of Voltaire in drawing his pension from the king of Prussia, while Frederick was in his most urgent straits, and while he was sportively exulting in the malicious expectation that he would one day have to allow the king of Prussia himself a pension.[5] And Rousseau was a poor man, living among the poor and in their style. His annual outlay at this time was covered by the modest sum of sixty louis.[6] What stamps his refusal of Frederick's gifts as true dignity is the fact that he not only did not refuse money for his

[1] Letter to Hume; Burton's *Life of Hume*, ii. 105, corroborating *Conf.*, xii. 196.

[2] Marischal to J. J. R.; Streckeisen, ii. 70.

[3] *Corr.*, iii. 40. Nov. 1, 1762.

[4] Burton's *Life*, ii. 113.

[5] Voltaire's *Corresp.* (1758). *Œuv.*, lxxv. pp 31 and 80.

[6] *Conf.*, xii. 237.

work, but expected and asked for it. Malesherbes at this very time begged him to collect plants for him. Joyfully, replied Rousseau, 'but as I cannot subsist without the aid of my own labour, I never meant, in spite of the pleasure that it might otherwise have been to me, to offer you the use of my time for nothing.'[1] In the same year, we may add, when the tremendous struggle of the Seven Years' War was closing, the philosopher wrote a second terse epistle to the king, and with this their direct communication came to an end. 'Sire, you are my protector and my benefactor; I would fain repay you if I can. You wish to give me bread; is there none of your own subjects in want of it? Take that sword away from my sight, it dazzles and pains me. It has done its work only too well, and the sceptre is abandoned. Great is the career for kings of your stuff, and you are still far from the term; time presses, and you have not a moment to lose. Fathom well your heart, O Frederick! Can you dare to die without having been the greatest of men? Would that I could see Frederick the just and the redoubtable covering his states with multitudes of men to whom he should be a father; then will J. J. Rousseau, the foe of kings, hasten to die at the foot of his throne.'[2] Frederick, strong as his interest was in all curious persons who could amuse him, was too busy to answer this, and Rousseau was not yet recognised as Voltaire's rival in power and popularity.

[1] *Corr.*, iii. 41. Nov. 11, 1762. [2] *Corr.*, iii. 38. Oct. 30, 1762.

Motiers is one of the half-dozen decent villages standing in the flat bottom of the Val de Travers, a widish valley that lies between the gorges of the Jura and the lake of Neuchâtel, and is famous in our day for its production of absinthe and of asphalt. The flat of the valley, with the Reuss making a bald and colourless way through the midst of it, is nearly treeless and is too uniform to be very pleasing. In winter the climate is most rigorous, for the level is high, while the surrounding hills admit the sun's rays late and cut them off early. Rousseau's description, accurate and recognisable as it is,[1] strikes an impartial tourist as too favourable. But when a piece of scenery is a home to a man, he has an eye for a thousand outlines, changes of light, soft variations of colour, and the landscape lives for him with an unspoken suggestion and intimate association, to all of which the swift passing stranger is very cold.

His cottage, which is still shown, was in the midst of the other houses, and his walks, which were at least as important to him as the home in which he dwelt, lay mostly among woody heights with streaming cascades. The country abounded in natural curiosities of a humble sort, and here that interest in plants which had always been strong in him, began to grow into a passion. Rousseau had so curious a feeling about them, that when in his botanical expeditions he came across a single flower of its kind, he could never bring himself to

[1] *Corr.*, iii. 110—5. Jan. 28, 1763.

pluck it. His sight, though not good for distant objects, was of the very finest for things held close, while his sense of smell was so acute and subtle that, according to a good witness, he might have classified plants by odours, if language furnished as many names as nature supplies varieties of fragrance.[1] He insisted in all botanizing and other walking excursions on going bareheaded, even in the heat of the dog-days, declaring that the action of the sun did him good. When the days began to turn, the summer was straightway at an end for him: 'my imagination,' he said, in a phrase which went further through his life than he supposed, 'at once brings winter.' He hated rain as much as he loved sun, and so must once have lost all the mystic fascination of the green Savoy lakes gleaming luminous through pale showers, and now the sombre majesty of the pines of his valley dripping in torn edges of cloud, and all the other sights that touch subtler parts of us than comforted sense.

One of his favourite journeys was to Colombier, the summer retreat of lord Marischal. For him he rapidly conceived the same warm friendship which he felt for the duke of Luxembourg, whom he had just left. And the sagacious, moderate, silent Scot had as warm a liking for the strange refugee who had come to him for shelter, or shall we say a kind of shaggy compassion as of a faithful inarticulate creature. His letters, which are numerous enough, abound in expressions of hearty good-will. These, if we reflect

[1] Bernardin de St. Pierre, xii. 103, 59, etc.

on the genuine worth, veracity, penetration, and experience, of the old man who wrote them, may fairly be counted the best testimony that remains to the existence of something sterling at the bottom of Rousseau's character.[1] It is here no insincere fine lady of the French court, but a homely and weather-beaten Scotchman, who speaks so often of his refugee's rectitude of heart and true sensibility.[2]

He insisted on being allowed to settle a small sum on Theresa, who had joined Rousseau at Motiers, and in other ways showed a true solicitude and considerateness both for her and him.[3] It was his constant dream that on his return to Scotland, Jean Jacques should accompany him, and that with David Hume, they would make a trio of philosophic hermits; that this was no mere cheery pleasantry is shown by the pains he took in settling the route for the journey.[4] The plan only fell through in consequence

[1] George Keith (1685—1778) was elder brother of Frederick's famous field-marshal, James Keith. They had taken part in the Jacobite rising of 1715, and fled abroad on its failure. James Keith brought his brother into the service of the king of Prussia, who sent him as ambassador to Paris (1751), afterwards made him governor of Neuchâtel (1754), and eventually prevailed on the English government to reinstate him in the rights which he had forfeited by his share in the rebellion (1763).

[2] Streckeisen, ii. 98, etc.

[3] One of Rousseau's chief distresses hitherto arose from the indigence in which Theresa would be placed in case of his death. Rey, the bookseller, gave her an annuity of about £16 a year, and lord Marischal's gift seems to have been 300 louis, the only money that Rousseau was ever induced to accept from any one in his life. See Streckeisen, ii. 99; *Corr.*, iii. 336. The most delicate and sincere of the many offers to provide for Theresa was made by madame de Verdelin (Streckeisen, ii. 506). The language in which madame de Verdelin speaks of Theresa in all her letters, is the best testimonial to character that this much-abused creature has to produce.

[4] Ib., 90, 92, etc. Summer of 1763.

of Frederick's cordial urgency that his friend should end his days with him; he returned to Prussia and lived at Sans Souci until the close, always retaining something of his good will for 'his excellent savage,' as he called the author of the Discourses. They had some common antipathies, including the fundamental one of dislike to society, and especially to the society of the people of Neuchâtel, the Gascons of Switzerland. 'Rousseau is gay in company,' lord Marischal wrote to Hume, 'polite, and what the French call *aimable*, and gains ground daily in the opinion of even the clergy here. His enemies elsewhere continue to persecute him, and he is pestered with anonymous letters.' [1]

Some of these were of a humour that disclosed the master hand. Voltaire had been universally suspected of stirring up the feeling of Geneva against its too famous citizen,[2] though for a man of less energy the affair of the Calas, which he was now in the thick of, might have sufficed. Voltaire's letters at this time show how hard he found it in the case of Rousseau to exercise his usual pity for the unfortunate. He could not forget that the man who was now tasting persecution had barked at philosophers and stage-plays; that he was a false brother, who had fatuously insulted the only men who could take his part; that he was a Judas who had betrayed the sacred cause.[3] On the whole, however, we ought

[1] Burton's *Life of Hume*, ii. 105. Oct. 2, 1762.

[2] The Confessions are not our only authority for this. See Streckeisen, ii. 64; also D'Alembert to Voltaire, Sept. 8, 1762.

[3] Voltaire's *Corr. Œuv.* lxvii. 458, 459, 485, etc.

probably to accept his word, though not very categorically given,[1] that he had nothing to do with the action taken against Rousseau. This is quite adequately explained, first by the influence of the resident of France at Geneva, which we know to have been exerted against the two fatal books,[2] and second by the anxiety of the oligarchic party to keep out of their town a man whose democratic tendencies they now knew so well and so justly dreaded.[3] Moultou, a Genevese minister, in the full tide of devotion and enthusiasm for the author of Emilius, met Voltaire at the house of a lady in Geneva. All will turn out well, cried the patriarch; 'the syndics will say, M. Rousseau, you have done ill to write what you have written; promise for the future to respect the religion of your country. Jean Jacques will promise, and perhaps he will say that the printer took the liberty of adding a sheet or two to his book.' 'Never,' cried the ardent Moultou; 'Jean Jacques never puts his name to works to disown them after.'[4] Voltaire disowned his own books with intrepid and sustained mendacity, yet he bore no grudge to Moultou for his vehemence. He sent for him shortly afterwards, professed an extreme desire to be reconciled with Rousseau, and would talk of nothing else. 'I swear to you,' wrote Moultou, 'that I could not understand him the least in the world; he is a marvellous actor; I could

[1] To D'Alembert, Sept. 15, 1762.
[2] Moultou to Rousseau, Streckeisen, i. 85, 87.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Streckeisen, i. 50.

have sworn that he loved you.'[1] There was no acting in it; the serious Genevese did not see that he was dealing with 'one all fire and fickleness, a child.'

Rousseau soon found out that he had excited not only the band of professed unbelievers, but also the tormenting wasps of orthodoxy. The doctors of the Sorbonne, not to be outdone in fervour for truth by the lawyers of the parliament, had condemned Emilius as a matter of course. In the same spirit of generous emulation Christopher de Beaumont, 'by the divine compassion archbishop of Paris, duke of Saint Cloud, peer of France, commander of the order of the holy ghost,' had issued (Aug. 20, 1762) one of those hateful documents in which bishops, catholic and protestant, have been wont for the last century and a half to hide with swollen bombastic phrase their dead and decomposing ideas. The windy folly of these poor pieces is usually in proportion to the hierarchic rank of those who promulge them, and an archbishop owes it to himself to blaspheme against reason and freedom in superlatives of malignant unction. Rousseau's reply (Nov. 18, 1762) is a masterpiece of dignity and uprightness. Turning to it from the mandate which was its provocative, we seem to grasp the hand of a man, after being chased by a nightmare of masked figures. Rousseau never showed the substantial quality of his character, and without this substance he could never have written as he did, more surely and unmistakably

[1] Streckeisen, i. 76.

than in controversy. He had such gravity, such austere self-command, such closeness of grip. Most of us feel pleasure in reading the matchless banter with which Voltaire assailed his theological enemies. Reading Rousseau's letter to De Beaumont we realise the comparative lowness of the pleasure which Voltaire had given us, and understand how it was that Rousseau made fanatics while Voltaire only made sceptics. At the very first words, the mitre, the crosier, the ring, fall into the dust; the archbishop of Paris, the duke of Saint Cloud, the peer of France, the commander of the holy ghost, is restored from the disguises of his enchantment, and becomes a human being. We hear the voice of a man hailing a man. Voltaire often sank to the level of ecclesiastics. Rousseau raised the archbishop to his own level, and with magnanimous courtesy addressed him as an equal. 'Why, my lord, have I anything to say to you? What common tongue can we use? How are we to understand one another? And what is there between me and you?' And he persevered in this distant lofty vein, hardly permitting himself a single moment of acerbity. We feel the ever-inspiring breath of seriousness and sincerity. This was because, as we repeat so often, Rousseau's ideas, engendered of dreams as they were, yet lived in him and were truly rooted in him.

He did not merely say, as any of us can say so fluently, that he craved reality in human relations, that distinctions of rank and post count for nothing, that our

lives are in our own hands and ought not to be blown hither and thither by outside opinion and words heedlessly scattered; that our faith, whatever it may be, is the most sacred of our possessions, organic, indissoluble, self-sufficing; that our passage across the world, if very short, is yet too serious to be wasted in frivolous disrespect for ourselves, and angry disrespect for others. All this was actually his mind. Hence the little difficulty he had in keeping his retort to the archbishop, as to his other antagonists, on a worthy level. Only once or twice does his sense of the reckless injustice with which he had been condemned, and of the persecution which was inflicted on him by one government after another, stir in him a blaze of high remonstrance. 'You accuse me of temerity,' he cried; 'how have I earned such a name, when I only propounded difficulties, and even that with so much reserve; when I only advanced reasons, and even that with so much respect; when I attacked no one, nor even named one? And you, my lord, how do you dare to reproach with temerity a man of whom you speak with such scanty justice and so little decency, with so small respect and so much levity? You call me impious, and of what impiety can you accuse me—me who never spoke of the supreme being except to pay him the honour and glory that are his due, nor of man except to persuade all men to love one another? The impious are those who unworthily profane the cause of god by making it serve the passions of men. The impious are those who, daring

to pass for the interpreters of divinity, and judges between it and man, exact for themselves the honours that are due to it only. The impious are those who arrogate to themselves the right of exercising the power of god upon earth, and insist on opening and shutting the gates of heaven at their own good will and pleasure. The impious are those who have libels read in the church. At this horrible idea my blood is enkindled, and tears of indignation fall from my eyes. Priests of the god of peace, you shall render an account one day, be very sure, of the use to which you have dared to put his house. . . . My lord, you have publicly insulted me: I have now convicted you of heaping calumny upon me. If you were a private person like myself, so that I could cite you before an equitable tribunal, and we could both appear before it, I with my book, and you with your mandate, assuredly you would be declared guilty and condemned to make reparation as public as the wrong was. But you belong to a rank that relieves you from the necessity of being just, and I am nothing. Yet you who profess the gospel, you a prelate appointed to teach others their duty, you know your own in such a case. Mine I have done: I have nothing more to say to you, and I hold my peace.'[1]

The letter was as good in dialectic as it was in moral tone. For this is a little curious, that Rousseau, so diffuse in expounding his opinions, and so un-

[1] *Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont*, pp. 163—6.

scientific in his method of coming to them, should have been one of the keenest and most trenchant of the controversialists of a very controversial time. Some of his strokes in defence of his first famous assault on civilisation are as hard, as direct, and as effective as any in the records of polemical literature. We will give one specimen from the letter to the archbishop of Paris, which has the recommendation of touching an argument that is not yet quite universally recognised for slain. The Savoyard Vicar had dwelt on the difficulty of accepting revelation as the voice of god, on account of the long distance of time between us, and the questionableness of the supporting testimony. To which the archbishop thus:—'But is there not then an infinity of facts, even earlier than those of the christian revelation, which it would be absurd to doubt? By what way other than that of human testimony has our author himself known the Sparta, the Athens, the Rome, whose laws, manners, and heroes he extols with such assurance? How many generations of men between him and the historians who have preserved the memory of these events?' First, says Rousseau in answer, 'it is in the order of things that human circumstances should be attested by human evidence, and they can be attested in no other way. I can only know that Rome and Sparta existed, because contemporaries assure me that they existed. In such a case this intermediate communication is indispensable. But why is it necessary between god and me? Is it simple or natural that god

should have gone in search of Moses to speak to Jean Jacques Rousseau? Second, nobody is obliged to believe that Sparta once existed, and nobody will be devoured by eternal flames for doubting it. Every fact of which we are not witnesses is only established by moral proofs, and moral proofs have various degrees of strength. Will the divine justice hurl me into hell for missing the exact point at which a proof becomes irresistible? If there is in the world an attested story, it is that of vampires; nothing is wanting for judicial proof,—reports and certificates from notables, surgeons, clergy, magistrates. But who believes in vampires, and shall we all be damned for not believing? Third, *my constant experience and that of all men is stronger in reference to prodigies, than the testimony of some men.*' He then strikes home with a parable. The abbé Pâris had died in the odour of Jansenist sanctity (1727), and extraordinary doings went on at his tomb; the lame walked, men and women sick of the palsy were made whole, and so forth. Suppose, says Rousseau, that an inhabitant of the rue St. Jacques speaks thus to the archbishop of Paris, 'My lord, I know that you neither believe in the beatitude of St. Jean de Pâris, nor in the miracles which god has been pleased publicly to work upon his tomb in the sight of the most enlightened and most populous city in the world; but I feel bound to testify to you that I have just seen the saint in person raised from the dead in the spot where his bones were laid.' The man of the rue St. Jacques

gives all the detail of such a circumstance that could strike a beholder. 'I am persuaded that on hearing such strange news, you will begin by interrogating him who testifies to its truth, as to his position, his feelings, his confessor, and other such points, and when from his air, as from his speech, you have perceived that he is a poor workman, and when having no confessional ticket to show you, he has confirmed your notion that he is a Jansenist, Ah, ah, you will say to him, you are a convulsionary and have seen saint Pâris resuscitated. There is nothing wonderful in that; you have seen so many other wonders!' The man would insist that the miracle had been seen equally by a number of other people, who though Jansenists, it is true, were persons of sound sense, good character, and excellent reputation. Some would send the man to bedlam, 'but you, after a grave reprimand, will be content with saying: I know that two or three witnesses, good people and of sound sense, may attest the life or the death of a man, but I do not know how many more are needed to establish the resurrection of a Jansenist. Until I find that out, go, my son, and try to strengthen your brain. I give you a dispensation from fasting, and here is something for you to make your broth with.' 'This is what you would say, and what any other sensible man would say in your place. Whence I conclude that even according to you and to every other sensible man, the moral proofs which are sufficient to establish facts that are in the order of moral possibilities, are

not sufficient to establish facts of another order and purely supernatural.'[1]

Perhaps the formal denunciation by the archbishop of Paris was less vexatious than the swarming of the angrier hive of ministers at his gates. 'If I had declared for atheism,' he says bitterly, 'they would at first have shrieked, but they would soon have left me in peace like the rest; the people of the lord would not have kept watch over me; everybody would not have thought he was doing me a high favour in not treating me as a person cut off from communion, and I should have been quits with all the world; the holy women in Israel would not have written me anonymous letters, and their charity would not have breathed devout insults; they would not have taken the trouble to assure me in all humility of heart that I was a castaway, an execrable monster, and that the world would have been well off, if some good soul had been at the pains to strangle me in my cradle. Worthy people on their side would not torment themselves and torment me to bring me back to the way of salvation; they would not charge at me from right and left, nor stifle me under the weight of their sermons, nor force me to bless their zeal while I cursed their importunity, nor to feel with gratitude that they have a call to lay me in my grave with weariness.'[2]

He had done his best to conciliate the good opinion of his vigilant neighbours. Their character for contentious orthodoxy was well known. It was at Neu-

[1] *Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont*, pp. 130—5. [2] Ib., p. 93.

châtel that the controversy as to the eternal punishment of the wicked raged with such fury as to produce a civil outbreak. The peace of the town was violently disturbed, ministers were suspended, magistrates were interdicted, life was lost, until at last Frederick promulgated his famous bull, 'Let the parsons who make for themselves a cruel and barbarous god, be eternally damned as they desire and deserve; and let those parsons who conceive god gentle and merciful, enjoy the plenitude of his mercy.'[1] When Rousseau came within the territory, preparations were made to imitate the action of Paris, Geneva, and Berne. It was only the king's express permission which saved him from a fourth proscription. The minister at Motiers was of the less inhuman stamp, and Rousseau, feeling that he could not, without failing in his engagements and his duty as a citizen, neglect the public profession of the faith to which he had been restored eight years before, attended the religious services with regularity. He even wrote to the pastor a letter in vindication of his book, and protesting the sincerity of his union with the reformed congregation.[2] The result of this was that the pastor came to tell him how great an honour he held it to count such a member in his flock, and how willing he was to admit him without further examination to partake in the communion.[3] Rousseau

[1] Carlyle's *Frederick*, Bk. xxi. ch. iv. Rousseau, *Corr.*, iii. 102.
[2] *Corr.*, iii. 57. Nov. 1762. To M. Montmollin.
[3] *Conf.*, xii. 206.

went to the ceremony with eyes full of tears and a heart swelling with emotion—a mood which we may respect as little or as much as we please, but which was certainly more edifying than the sight of Voltaire going through the same rite merely to harass a priest and infuriate a bishop.

In all other respects he lived a harmless life during the three years of his sojourn in the Val de Travers. As he could never endure what he calls the inactive chattering of the parlour, with people sitting in front of one another with folded hands and nothing in motion except the tongue, he learnt the art of making laces, and used to carry his pillow about with him, or sat at his own door working like the women of the village, and chatting with the passers-by. He used to make presents of his work to young women about to marry, always on the condition that they should suckle their children when they came to have them. If a little whimsical, this was a harmless and respectable pastime. It is pleasanter to think of a philosopher finding diversion in weaving laces, than of noblemen making it the business of their lives to run after ribands. A society resting on breeches was incensed about the same time by Rousseau's adoption of the Armenian costume, the vest, the furred bonnet, the caftan, and the girdle. There was nothing very wonderful in this departure from use. An Armenian tailor used often to visit some friends at Montmorency; Rousseau knew him, and reflected that such a dress would be of singular comfort to him in

the circumstances of his bodily disorder.[1] Here was a solid practical reason for what has usually been counted a demonstration of a turned brain. Rousseau had as good cause for going about in a caftan, as Chatham had for coming to the house of parliament wrapped in flannel. Vanity and a desire flowing from it to attract notice may, we admit, have had something to do with Rousseau's adoption of an uncommon way of dressing. Shrewd wits like the duke of Luxembourg and his wife did not suppose that it was so. We, living a hundred years after, cannot possibly know whether it was so or not, and our estimate of Rousseau's strange character would be very little worth forming, if it only turned on petty singularities of this kind. The foolish, equivocally blessed with the quality of articulate speech, may, if they choose, satisfy their own self-love by reducing all action out of the common course to a series of variations on the same motive in others. Men blessed by the benignity of experience, will be thankful not to waste life in guessing evil about unknowable trifles.

During his stay at Motiers, Rousseau's time was hardly ever his own. Visitors of all nations, drawn either by respect for his work, or by curiosity to see a man who had been proscribed by so many governments, came to him in throngs. His partisans at Geneva insisted on sending people to convince themselves how good a man they were proscribing. 'I had never been free from strangers for six weeks,' he

[1] *Conf.*, xii. 198.

writes; 'two days after, I had a Westphalian gentleman and one from Genoa; six days later, two persons from Zurich, who stayed a week; then a Genevese, recovering from an illness, and come for change of air, fell ill again, and has only just gone away.'[1] One visitor writing home to his wife of the philosopher to whom he had come on a pilgrimage, describes his manners in terms which perhaps touch us with surprise: 'Thou hast no idea how charming his society is, what true politeness there is in his manners, what a depth of serenity and cheerfulness in his talk. Didst thou not expect quite a different picture, and figure to thyself an eccentric creature, always grave and sometimes even abrupt? Ah, what a mistake! To an expression of great mildness he unites a glance of fire, and eyes of a vivacity the like of which was never seen. When you handle any matter in which he takes an interest, then his eyes, his lips, his hands, everything about him speaks. You would be quite wrong to picture in him an everlasting grumbler. Not at all; he laughs with those who laugh, he chats and jokes with children, he rallies his housekeeper.'[2] He was not so civil to all the world, and occasionally turned upon his pursuers with a word of most sardonic roughness.[3] But he could also be very generous. We find him pressing a loan from his scanty store on an outcast adventurer, and warning him, 'When I lend (which happens rarely enough), 'tis

[1] *Corr.*, iii. 295. Dec. 25, 1763. [2] Quoted in Musset-Pathay, ii. 500.
[3] For instance, *Corr.*, iii. 249.

my constant maxim never to count on repayment, nor to exact it.'[1] He received hundreds of letters, some seeking an application of his views on education to a special case, others craving further exposition of his religious doctrines. Before he had been at Motiers nine months he had paid ten louis for the postage of letters, which after all contained only reproaches, insults, menaces, imbecilities.[2]

Not the least curious of his correspondence at this time is that with the prince of Würtemberg, then living near Lausanne.[3] The prince had a little daughter four months old, and he was resolved that her upbringing should be carried on as the author of Emilius might please to direct. Rousseau replied courteously that he did not pretend to direct the education of princes or princesses.[4] His correspondent was undaunted, sent him full details of his babe's habits and faculties, and continued to do so at short intervals, with the fondness of a young mother or an old nurse. Rousseau was interested, and took some trouble to draw up rules for the child's nurture and admonition. One may smile now and then at the prince's ingenuous zeal, but his fervid respect and devotion for the teacher in whom he thought he had found the wisest man that ever lived, and who had at

[1] *Corr.*, iii. 364, 381. [2] *Corr.*, iii. 181—6, etc.

[3] Prince Lewis Eugene, son of Charles Alexander (reigning duke from 1733 to 1737); a younger brother of Charles Eugene, known as Schiller's duke of Würtemberg, who reigned up to 1793. Frederick Eugene, known in the Seven Years' War, was another brother. Rousseau's correspondent became reigning duke in 1793, but only lived a year and a half afterwards.

[4] *Corr.*, iii. 250. Sept. 29, 1763.

any rate spoken the word that kindled the love of virtue and truth in him, his eagerness to know what Rousseau thought right, and his equal eagerness in trying to do it, his care to arrange his household in a simple and methodical way to please his master, his discipular patience when Rousseau told him that his verses were poor, or that he was too fond of his wife,—all this is a little uncommon in a prince, and deserves a place among the mass of other evidence of the power which Rousseau's pictures of domestic simplicity and wise and humane education had in the eighteenth century. It gives us a glimpse, close and direct, of the naturalist revival reaching up into high places. But the trade of philosopher in such times is perhaps an irksome one, and Rousseau was the private victim of his public action. His prince sent multitudes of Germans to visit the sage, and his letters, endless with their details of the nursery, may well have become a little tedious to a worn-out creature who only wanted to be left alone.[1] The famous prince Henry, Frederick's brother, thought a man happy who could have the delight of seeing Rousseau as often as he chose.[2] People forgot the other side of this delight, and the unlucky philosopher found in a hundred ways, alike from enemies and the friends whose curiosity makes them as bad as enemies, that the pedestal of glory partakes of the nature of the pillory or the stocks.

[1] The prince's letters are given in the Streckeisen collection, vol. ii.
[2] Streckeisen, ii. 202.

It is interesting to find two famous English names in the list of the multitudes with whom he had to do at this time, Gibbon and Boswell.[1] The former was now at Lausanne, whither he had just returned from the visit to England which persuaded him that his father would never endure his alliance with the daughter of an obscure Swiss pastor. He had just 'yielded to his fate, sighed as a lover and obeyed as a son.' 'How sorry I am for our poor mademoiselle Curchod,' writes Moultou to Rousseau; 'Gibbon whom she loves, and to whom she has sacrificed, as I know, some excellent matches, has come to Lausanne, but cold, insensible, and as entirely cured of his old passion as she is far from cure. She has written me a letter that makes my heart ache.' He then entreats Rousseau to use his influence with Gibbon, who is on the point of starting for Motiers, by extolling the lady's worth and understanding to him.[2] 'I hope Mr. Gibbon will not come,' replied the sage; 'his coldness makes me think ill of him. I have been looking over his book again [the *Essai sur l'étude de la littérature*, 1761]; he runs after brilliance too much, and is strained. Mr. Gibbon is not the man for me, and I do not think he is the man for mademoiselle Curchod either.'[3] Whether Gibbon went or not, we do not know. He knew in after years what had been said of him by Jean Jacques, and protested with mild pomp that this extraordinary man should have been

[1] Possibly Wilkes also; *Corr.*, iv. 200.

[2] Streckeisen, i. 89. June 1, 1763. [3] *Corr.*, iii, 202. June 4, 1763.

less precipitate in condemning the moral character and conduct of a stranger.[1]

Boswell, as we know, had left Johnson 'rolling his majestic frame in his usual manner' on Harwich beach in 1763, and was now on his travels. Like many of his countrymen, he found his way to lord Marischal, and here his indomitable passion for making the personal acquaintance of any one who was much talked about, naturally led him to seek so singular a character as the man now at Motiers. What Rousseau thought of one who was as singular a character as himself in another direction, we do not know.[2] Lord Marischal warned Rousseau that his visitor is of excellent disposition, but full of visionary ideas, even having seen spirits—a serious proof of unsoundness to a man who had lived in the very positive atmosphere of Frederick's court at Berlin. 'I only hope,' says the sage Scot, of the Scot who was not sage, 'that he may not fall into the hands of people who will turn his head: he was very pleased with the reception you gave him.'[3] As it happens he

[1] *Memoirs of my Life*, p. *55*, *n.* [Ed. 1862.] Necker (1732—1804), whom mdlle. Curchod ultimately married, was an eager admirer of Rousseau. 'Ah, how close the tender, humane and virtuous soul of Julie,' he wrote to her author, 'has brought me to you. How the reading of those letters gratified me! how many good emotions did they stir or fortify! How many sublimities in a thousand places in these six volumes, not the sublimity that perches itself in the clouds, but that which pushes every-day virtues to their highest point,' and so on. Feb. 16, 1761. Streckeisen, i. 333.

[2] Boswell's name only occurs twice in Rousseau's letters, I believe; once (*Corr.*, iv. 394) as the writer of a letter which Hume was suspected of tampering with, and previously (iv. 70) as the bearer of a letter. See also Streckeisen, i. 262.

[3] Streckeisen, ii. 111. Jan. 18, 1765.

was the means of sending Boswell to a place where his head was turned, though not very mischievously. Rousseau was at that time full of Corsican projects, of which this is the proper place for us very briefly to speak.

The prolonged struggles of the natives of Corsica to assert their independence of the oppressive administration of the Genoese, which had begun in 1729, came to an end for a moment in 1755, when Paoli (1726—1807) defeated the Genoese, and proceeded to settle the government of the island. In the Social Contract Rousseau had said, 'There is still in Europe one country capable of legislation, and that is the island of Corsica. The valour and constancy with which this brave people has succeeded in recovering and defending its liberty, entitle it to the good fortune of having some wise man to teach them how to preserve it. I have a presentiment that this little isle will one day astonish Europe,' [1]—a presentiment that came true enough in a sense long after Rousseau was gone, in a man who was born on the little isle seven years later than the publication of this passage. Some of the Corsican leaders were highly flattered, and in August, 1764, Buttafuoco entered into correspondence with Rousseau for the purpose of inducing him to draw up a set of political institutions and a code of laws. Paoli himself was too shrewd to have much belief in the application of ideal systems, and we are assured that he had no intention of making Rousseau

[1] Bk. II. ch. X.

the Solon of his island, but only of inducing him to inflame the gallantry of its inhabitants by writing a history of their exploits.[1] Rousseau, however, did not understand the invitation in this narrower sense. He replied that the very idea of such a task as legislation transported his soul, and he entered into it with the liveliest ardour. He resolved to quarter himself with Theresa in a cottage in some lonely district in the island; in a year he would collect the necessary information as to the manners and opinions of the inhabitants, and three years afterwards he would produce a set of institutions fit for a free and valorous people.[2] In the midst of this enthusiasm (May, 1765) he urged Boswell to visit Corsica, and gave him a letter to Paoli, with results which we know in the shape of an Account of Corsica (1768), and a feverishness of imagination upon that subject, which in due time made Johnson sternly cry out, 'Mind your own affairs, and leave the Corsicans to theirs; I wish you would empty your head of Corsica.'[3] At the end of 1765, the immortal hero-worshipper on his return expected to come upon his hero at Motiers, but finding that he was in Paris wrote him a wonderful letter in wonderful French. 'You will forget all your cares for many an evening, while I tell you what I have seen. I owe you the deepest obligation for sending me to Corsica. The voyage has done me

[1] Boswell's *Account of Corsica*, p. 367.

[2] The correspondence between Rousseau and Buttafuoco has been published in the *Œuvres et Corr. Inédites de J. J. R.*, 1861. See pp. 35, 43, etc.

[3] Boswell's *Life*, 179, 193, etc. (Ed. 1866.)

marvellous good. It has made me as if all the lives of Plutarch had sunk into my soul . . . . I am devoted to the Corsicans heart and soul; if you, illustrious Rousseau, the philosopher whom they have chosen to help them by your lights to preserve and enjoy the liberty which they have acquired with so much heroism —if you have cooled towards these gallant islanders, why I am sorry for you.'[1]

Alas, by this time the gallant islanders had been driven out of Rousseau's mind by personal mishaps. First, Voltaire or some other enemy had spread the rumour that the invitation to become the Lycurgus of Corsica was a practical joke, and Rousseau's suspicious temper formed what he took for confirmation of this in some trifling incidents with which we certainly need not concern ourselves.[2] Next, a very real storm had burst upon him which drove him once more to seek a new place of shelter, other than an island occupied by French troops. For France having begun by dispatching auxiliaries to the assistance of the Genoese (1764), ended by buying the island from the

[1] '*Je suis tout homme de pouvoir vous regarder avec pitié!*' Letter dated Jan. 4, 1766, and given by Musset-Pathay as from a Scotch lord, unnamed. Boswell had the honour of conducting Theresa to England, after Hume had taken Rousseau over. 'This young gentleman,' writes Hume, 'very good-humoured, very agreeable, and very mad—has such a rage for literature that I dread some circumstance fatal to our friend's honour. You remember the story of Terentia, who was first married to Cicero, then to Sallust, and at last in her old age married a young nobleman, who imagined that she must possess some secret which would convey to him eloquence and genius.' Burton's *Life*, ii. 307—8. Boswell mentions that he met Rousseau in England (*Account of Corsica*, p. 340), and also gives Rousseau's letter introducing him to Paoli (p. 266.)

[2] To Buttafuoco, p. 48, etc.

Genoese senate, with a sort of equity of redemption (1768)—an iniquitous transaction, as Rousseau justly called it, equally shocking to justice, humanity, reason, and policy.[1] Civilisation would have been saved one of its sorest trials, if Genoa could have availed herself of her equity, and so have delivered France from the acquisition of the most terrible citizen that ever scourged a state.[2]

The condemnation of Rousseau by the Council in 1762 had divided Geneva into two camps, and was followed by a prolonged contention between his partisans and his enemies. The root of the contention was political rather than theological. To take Rousseau's side was to protest against the oligarchic authority which had condemned him, and the quarrel about Emilius was only an episode in the long war between the popular and aristocratic parties. This strife, after coming to a height for the first time in 1734, had abated after the pacification of 1738, but the pacification was only effective for a time, and the roots of division were still full of vitality. The lawfulness of the authority and the regularity of the procedure by which Rousseau had been condemned, offered convenient ground for carrying on the dispute, and its warmth was made more intense by the suggestion on the popular side that perhaps the religion of

[1] *Corr.*, vi. 176. Feb. 26, 1770.

[2] It may be worth noticing, as a link between historic personages, that Napoleon Bonaparte's first piece was a *Lettre à Matteo Buttafuoco* (1791), the same Buttafuoco with whom Rousseau corresponded, who had been Choiseul's agent in the union of the island to France, was sent as deputy to the Constituent, and became the bitterest enemy of Paoli and the patriotic party.

the book which the oligarchs had condemned, was more like christianity than the religion of the oligarchs who condemned it.

Rousseau was too near the scene of the quarrel, too directly involved in its issues, too constantly in contact with the people who were engaged in it, not to feel the angry buzzings very close about his ears. If he had been as collected and as self-possessed as he loved to fancy, they would have gone for very little in the life of the day. But Rousseau never stood on the heights whence a strong man surveys with clear eye and firm soul the unjust, or mean, or furious moods of the world. Such achievement is not hard for the creature who is wrapped up in himself, and is careless of the passions of men about him, because he thinks they cannot hurt him, and not because he has measured them, and deliberately assigned them a place among the elements in which a man's destiny is cast. It is only hard for one who is penetrated by true interest in the opinion and action of his fellows, thus to keep sympathy warm as well as self-sufficience true. The task was too hard for Rousseau, though his patience under long persecution far surpassed that of any of the other oppressed teachers of the time. In the spring of 1763 he deliberately renounced in all due forms his rights of burgess-ship and citizenship in the city and republic of Geneva.[1] And at length he broke forth against his Genevese persecutors in the Letters from the Mountain (1764), a long but

[1] *Corr.*, iii. 190. To the First Syndic, May 12, 1763.

extremely vigorous and adroit rejoinder to the pleas which his enemies had put forth in Tronchin's Letters from the Country. If any one now cares to satisfy himself how really unjust and illegal the treatment was, which Rousseau received at the hands of the authorities of his native city, he may do so by examining these most forcible letters. The second part of them may interest the student of political history by its account of the working of the institutions of the little republic. We seem to be reading over again the history of a Greek city; the growth of a wealthy class in face of an increasing number of poor burgesses, the imposition of burdens in unfair proportions upon the metoikoi, the gradual usurpation of legislative and administrative function (including especially the judicial) by the oligarchs, and the twisting of democratic machinery to oligarchic ends; then the growth of staseis or violent factions, followed by metabolé or overthrow of the established constitution, ending in foreign intervention. The Four Hundred at Athens would have treated any Social Contract that should have appeared in their day, just as sternly as the Two Hundred or the Twenty-five treated the Social Contract that did appear, and for just the same reasons.

Otherwise the Letters are now of no vitality for us. They prove that the procedure against the man was precipitate, against the ordinances, and without a precedent; in short that Rousseau was the victim of genuine persecution. Beyond that, his vindication

has become common form, which needs no repetition. We know only too well the impotence of the argument that the reformation, if it was anything at all, was the assertion of the right of private judgment, and therefore though it might be right and necessary to exact conformity to standards in the ministers of an ecclesiastical organization, it could only be wrong and contrary to protestant spirit and principle to insist on uniformity of belief among laymen. And we know too the hopelessness of demonstrating to the partisans of dogmatic systems that a community which should accept and act upon simple non-dogmatic ideas must necessarily produce pure and virtuous men, loyal and disinterested citizens, and true disciples of the spirit and teaching of the founder. And who does not know the weary circle of insoluble questions,—how we are to distinguish the conjurings of pagan priests from the miracles of Jehovah; how we are to be sure that a phenomenon is a miracle, and not merely the result of natural energies of whose law we still happen to be ignorant; whether the beauty of the doctrine proves the miracle, or the miracle proves the divine source and quality of the doctrine? All these matters were handled by Rousseau gravely, honestly, and in a worthy spirit. He ingeniously shows in one place what a monstrous picture might be drawn of the teaching of the four gospels, by any one who should pick out detached sentences, on the method on which his own book had been treated;[1] with this pos-

[1] Letter, i. 219.

sible exception, there is no phrase nor figure with which the most superstitious disputant could quarrel, however strenuous his objections to the substance of the contention. The remonstrance against the condemnation of his political book is equally just and temperate. For once Rousseau agrees that you ought never to punish reason, nor even reasoning, for such punishment must prove too much against those who inflict it, and he renews the old taunt of the scandal of the repression of free discussion, by men whose whole political and religious system rests on the sacredness of individual judgment and freedom. The logic of reason, however, is always in an individual case too weak for the logic of power. The battle of argument against sinister interests is never successful, until a combination of many other causes has detached some contingent from the hostile force. No considerable body of men is ever moved to be just by syllogism, until either sympathetic instinct or self-interest has brought them round to the conclusion by bye-paths.

Rousseau proved his case with redundancy of demonstration. A body of burgesses had previously availed themselves (Nov., 1763) of a legal right, and made a technical representation to the Lesser Council that the laws had been broken in his case. The Council in return availed itself of an equally legal right, its *droit négatif*, and declined to entertain the representation, without giving any reasons. Unfortunately for Rousseau's comfort, the ferment which

his new vindication of his cause stirred up, did not end with the condemnation and burning of his manifesto. For the parliament of Paris ordered the Letters from the Mountain to be burned, and the same decree and the same faggot served for that and for Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary (April, 1765).[1] It was also burned at the Hague (Jan. 22). It was noticed by an observer by no means friendly to the priests, that at Paris it was not the fanatics of orthodoxy, but the encyclopædists and their flock, who on this occasion raised the storm and set the zeal of the magistrates in motion.[2] The vanity and egoism of rationalistic sects are as fatal to candour, justice, and compassion, as the intolerant pride of the great churches.

Persecution came nearer to Rousseau and took more inconvenient shapes than this. A terrible libel appeared (Feb., 1765), full of the coarsest calumnies. Rousseau, stung by their insolence and falseness, sent it to Paris to be published there with a prefatory note stating that it was by a Genevese pastor whom he named. This landed him in fresh mortification, for the pastor disavowed the libel, Rousseau declined to accept the disavowal, and sensible men were wearied by acrimonious declarations, explanations, protests.[3] Then the clergy of Neuchâtel were not able any longer to resist the opportunity of inflicting such

[1] Grimm's *Corr. Lit.*, iv. 235. For Rousseau's opinion of his book's companion at the stake, see *Corr.*, iii. 442.

[2] Streckeisen, ii. 526.

[3] There appears to be no doubt that Rousseau was wrong in attributing to Vernes the *Sentimens des Citoyens*.

torments as they could, upon a heretic whom they might more charitably have left to those ultimate and everlasting torments which were so precious to their religious imagination. They began to press the pastor of the village where Rousseau lived, and with whom he had hitherto been on excellent terms. The pastor, though he had been liberal enough to admit his singular parishioner to the communion, in spite of the Savoyard Vicar, was not courageous enough to resist the bigotry of the professional body to which he belonged. He warned Rousseau not to present himself at the next communion. The philosopher insisted that he had a right to do this, until formally cast out by the consistory. The consistory, composed mainly of a body of peasants entirely bound to their minister in matters of religion, cited him to appear, and answer such questions as might test his loyalty to the faith. Rousseau prepared a most deliberate vindication of all that he had written, which he intended to speak to his rustic judges. The eve of the morning on which he had to appear, he knew his discourse by heart; when morning came he could not repeat two sentences. So he fell back on the instrument over which he had more mastery than he had over tongue or memory, and wrote what he wished to say. The pastor, in whom irritated egoism was probably by this time giving additional heat to professional zeal, was for fulminating a decree of excommunication, but there appears to have been some indirect interference with the proceedings of the consistory by the king's

officials at Neuchâtel, and the ecclesiastical bolt was held back.[1] Other weapons were not wanting. The pastor proceeded to spread rumours among his flock that Rousseau was a heretic, even an atheist, and most prodigious of all, that he had written a book containing the monstrous doctrine that women have no souls. The pulpit resounded with sermons proving to the honest villagers that antichrist was quartered in the parish in very flesh. The Armenian apparel gave a high degree of plausibleness to such an opinion, and as the wretched man went by the door of his neighbours, he heard cursing and menace, while a hostile pebble now and again whistled past his ear. His botanizing expeditions were believed to be devoted to search for noxious herbs, and a man who died in the agonies of nephritic colic, was supposed to have been poisoned by him.[2] If persons went to the post-office for letters for him, they were treated with insult.[3] At length the ferment against him grew hot enough to be serious. A huge block of stone was found placed so as to kill him when he opened his door; and one night an attempt was made to stone him in his house.[4] Popular hate shown with this degree of violence was too much for his fortitude, and after a residence of rather more than three years (September 8—10, 1765),

[1] *Corr.*, iv. 116, 122 (April, 1765), 165—96 (August); also *Conf.*, xii. 245.

[2] Note to M. Auguis's edition, *Corr.*, v. 395.

[3] *Corr.*, iv. 204.

[4] *Conf.*, xii. 259. This lapidation has sometimes been doubted, and treated as an invention of Rousseau's morbid suspicion. The official documents prove that his account was substantially true (see Musset-Pathay, ii. 559).

he fled from the inhospitable valley to seek refuge he knew not where.

In his rambles of a previous summer, he had seen a little island in the lake of Bienne, which struck his imagination and lived in his memory. Thither he now, after a moment of hesitation, turned his steps, with something of the same instinct as draws a child towards a beam of the sun. He forgot or was heedless of the circumstance that the isle of St. Peter lay in the jurisdiction of the canton of Berne, whose government had forbidden him their territory. Craving for a little ease in the midst of his wretchedness extinguished thought of jurisdictions and proscriptive decrees.

The spot where he now found peace for a brief space usually disappoints the modern hunter for the picturesque, who after wearying himself with the follies of a capital seeks the most violent tonic he can find in the lonely terrors of glacier and peak, and sees only tameness in a pygmy island, that offers nothing sublimer than a high grassy terrace, some cool overbranching avenues, some mimic vales, and meadows and vineyards sloping down to the sheet of blue water at their feet. Yet as one sits here on a summer day, with tired mowers sleeping on their grass heaps in the sun, in a stillness faintly broken by the timid lapping of the water in the sedge, or the rustling of swift lizards across the heated sand, while the Bernese snow giants line a distant horizon with mysterious solitary shapes, it is easy to know what solace life in such a scene might bring to a man distracted by pain of body

and pain and weariness of soul. Rousseau has commemorated his too short sojourn here in the most perfect of all his compositions.[1]

'I found my existence so charming, and led a life so agreeable to my humour, that I resolved here to end my days. My only source of disquiet was whether I should be allowed to carry my project out. In the midst of the presentiments that disturbed me, I would fain have had them make a perpetual prison of my refuge, and confine me in it for the rest of my life. I longed for them to cut off all power and all hope of leaving it, and to forbid me holding any communication with the main land, so that knowing nothing of what was being done in the world, I might have forgotten its existence, and people might have forgotten mine too. They only let me pass two months in the island, but I could have passed two years, two centuries, and all eternity, without a moment's weariness, though I had not, with my companion, any other society than that of the steward, his wife, and their servants. They were in truth honest souls and nothing more, but that was just what I wanted. . . Carried thither in a violent hurry, alone and without a thing, I afterwards sent for my housekeeper, my books, and my scanty possessions, of which I had the delight of unpacking nothing, leaving my boxes and chests as they had come, and dwelling in the house where I counted on ending my days, as if it were an inn whence I must set forth on the morrow. All things went so well, just as they were, that to think of ordering them better were to spoil them. One of my greatest joys was to leave my books safely fastened up in their boxes, and to be without a case for writing. When any unlucky letter forced me to take up a pen for an answer, I grumblingly borrowed the steward's inkstand, and gave it back to him with all the haste I could, in the vain hope that I should never have need of the loan any more. Instead of those weary quires and reams and piles of old books, I filled my

[1] The fifth of the *Rêveries*. See also *Conf.*, 262—79, and *Corr.*, iv. 206—224. His stay in the island was from the second week in September down to the last in October, 1765.

chamber with flowers and grasses, for I was then in my first fervour for botany. Having given up employment that should be a task to me, I needed one that would be an amusement, nor cause me more pains than a sluggard might choose to take. I undertook to make the *Flora petrinsularis*, and to describe every single plant on the island, in detail enough to occupy me for the rest of my days. In consequence of this fine scheme, every morning after breakfast, which we all took in company, I used to go with a magnifying glass in my hand and my Systema Naturæ under my arm, to visit some district of the island. I had divided it for that purpose into small squares, meaning to go through them one after another in each season of the year. At the end of two or three hours I used to return laden with an ample harvest, a provision for amusing myself after dinner indoors, in case of rain. I spent the rest of the morning in going with the steward, his wife, and Theresa, to see the labourers and the harvesting, generally setting to work along with them; and many a time when people from Berne came to see me, they found me perched on a high tree, with a bag fastened round my waist; I kept filling it with fruits and then let it down to the ground with a rope. The exercise I had taken in the morning and the good humour that always comes from exercise, made the repose of dinner vastly pleasant to me; but if it was kept up too long, and fine weather invited me forth, I could not wait, but was speedily off to throw myself all alone into a boat, that I used, when the water was smooth enough, to pull out to the middle of the lake. There, stretched at full length in the bottom of the boat, with my eyes turned up to the sky, I let myself float slowly hither and thither as the water listed, sometimes for hours together, plunged in a thousand confused delicious musings, which though they had no fixed nor constant object, were not the less on that account a hundred times dearer to me than all that I had found sweetest in what they call the pleasures of life. Often warned by the going down of the sun that it was time to return, I found myself so far from the island, that I was forced to row with all my might to get in before it was

pitch dark. At other times instead of losing myself in the midst of the waters, I had a fancy to coast along the green shores of the island, where the clear waters and cool shadows tempted me to bathe. But one of my most frequent expeditions was from the larger island to the less; there I disembarked and spent my afternoon, sometimes in mimic rambles among wild elders, persicaries, willows, and shrubs of every species, sometimes settling myself on the top of a sandy knoll, covered with turf, wild thyme, flowers, even sainfoin, and trefoil that had most likely been sown there in old days, making excellent quarters for rabbits. They might multiply in peace without either fearing anything or harming anything. I spoke of this to the steward. He at once had male and female rabbits brought from Neuchâtel, and we went in high state, his wife, one of his sisters, Theresa, and I, to settle them in the little island. The foundation of our colony was a feast-day. The pilot of the Argonauts was not prouder than I, as I bore my company and the rabbits in triumph from our island to the smaller one. . .

When the lake was too rough for me to sail, I spent my afternoon in going up and down the island, gathering plants to right and left; seating myself now in smiling lonely nooks to dream at my ease, now on little terraces and knolls, to follow with my eyes the superb and ravishing prospect of the lake and its shores, crowned on one side by the neighbouring hills, and on the other, melting into rich and fertile plains, up to the feet of the pale blue mountains on their far-off edge.

As evening drew on, I used to come down from the high ground and sit on the beach at the water's brink in some hidden sheltering place. There the murmur of the waves and their agitation, charming all my senses and driving every other movement from my soul, plunged it into delicious dreamings, in which night often surprised me. The flux and reflux of the water, its ceaseless stirrings, swelling and falling at intervals, striking on ear and sight, made up for the internal movements which my musings extinguished, and were enough to give me delight in mere existence, without taking any trouble of thinking. From time to time arose some passing

thought of the instability of the things of this world, of which the face of the waters offered an image: but such light impressions were swiftly effaced in the uniformity of the ceaseless motion, which rocked me as in a cradle, and held me with such fascination that even when called at the hour and by the signal appointed, I could not tear myself away without summoning all my force.

After supper, when the evening was fine, we used to go all together for a saunter on the terrace, to breathe the freshness of the air from the lake. We sat down in the arbour, laughing, chatting, or singing some old song, and then we went home to bed, well pleased with the day, and only craving another that should be exactly like it on the morrow. . . .

All is in a continual flux upon the earth. Nothing in it keeps a form constant and determinate; our affections, fastening on external things, necessarily change and pass just as they do. Ever in front of us or behind us, they recall the past that is gone, or anticipate a future which in many a case is destined never to be. There is nothing solid to which the heart can fix itself. Here we have little more than a pleasure that passes; as for the happiness that endures, I cannot tell if it be so much as known. There is hardly in the midst of our liveliest delights a single instant when the heart could tell us with real truth—"*I would this instant might last for ever.*" And how can we give the name of happiness to a fleeting state that still leaves the heart unquiet and void, that makes us regret something gone, or still long for something to come?

But if there is a state in which the soul finds a situation solid enough to comport with perfect repose, and with the expansion of its whole faculty, without need of calling back the past, or pressing on towards the future; where time is nothing for it, and the present has no ending; with no mark for its own duration and without a trace of succession; without a single other sense of privation or delight, of pleasure or pain, of desire or apprehension, than this single sense of existence—so long as such a state endures, he who finds himself in t, may talk of bliss, not with a poor, relative,

and imperfect happiness such as people find in the pleasures of life, but with a happiness full, perfect, and sufficing, that leaves in the soul no conscious unfilled void. Such a state was many a day mine in my solitary musings in the isle of St. Peter, either lying in my boat as it floated on the water, or seated on the banks of the broad lake, or in other places on the brink of some broad stream, or a rivulet murmuring over a gravel bed.

What is it that one enjoys in a situation like this? Nothing outside of one's self, nothing except one's self and one's own existence. . . . But most men tossed by unceasing passion, have little knowledge of such a state, and having tasted imperfectly for a few moments, retain no more than an obscure and confused idea of it, too weak to let them feel its charm. It would not even be good in the present constitution of things, that in their eagerness for these gentle ecstasies, they should fall into a disgust for the active life in which their duty is prescribed to them by their constantly increasing needs. But a wretch cut off from human society, who can do nothing here below that is useful and good either for himself or for other people, may find in this state for all lost human felicities many recompenses, of which neither fortune nor men can ever rob him.

'Tis true that these recompenses cannot be felt by all souls, nor in all situations. The heart must be in peace, nor any passion come to trouble its calm. There must be in the surrounding objects neither absolute repose nor excess of agitation, but a uniform and moderated movement without either shock or interval. With no movement, life is only lethargy. If the movement be unequal or too strong, it awakes us; by recalling us to the objects around, it destroys the charm of our musing, and plucks us from within ourselves, instantly to throw us back under the yoke of fortune and man, and restore us to all the consciousness of misery. Absolute stillness inclines one to gloom. It offers an image of death: then the help of a cheerful imagination is necessary, and presents itself naturally enough to those whom heaven has endowed with such a gift. The movement which does not come from without, then

stirs within us. The repose is less complete, it is true, but it is also more agreeable when light and gentle ideas, without agitating the depths of the soul, only softly skim the surface. This sort of musing we may taste whenever there is tranquillity, and I have thought that in the Bastille, and even in a dungeon where no object struck my sight, I could have dreamed away most pleasurable days.

But it must be said that all this came better and more happily in a fruitful and lonely island, where nothing presented itself to me save smiling pictures, where nothing recalled saddening memories, where the fellowship of the few inhabitants was gentle and obliging, without being exciting enough to busy me incessantly, where in short I was free to surrender myself all day long to the promptings of my taste or to the most luxurious indolence. . . As I came out from a long and sweet musing fit, seeing myself surrounded by verdure and flowers and birds, and letting my eyes wander far over romantic shores that fringed a wide expanse of water bright as crystal, I fitted all these attractive objects to my dreams; and when at last I slowly recovered myself and what was about me, I could not mark the point that cut off dream from reality, so equally did all things unite to endear to me the lonely retired life I led in this happy spot! Why can that life not come back to me again? Why can I not go finish my days in the beloved island, never to quit it, never again to see in it one dweller from the mainland to bring back to me the memory of all the calamities of every sort that they have delighted in heaping on my head for all these long years? . . . Freed from the earthly passions engendered by the tumult of social life, my soul would many a time lift itself above this atmosphere, and commerce beforehand with the heavenly intelligences to whose number it trusts to be erelong taken.'

This full and perfect sufficience of life was abruptly disturbed. The government of Berne gave him notice to quit the island and their territory within

fifteen days. He represented to the authorities that he was infirm and ill, that he knew not whither to go, and that travelling in wintry weather would be dangerous to his life. He even made the most extraordinary request that any man in similar straits ever did make. 'In this extremity,' he wrote to their representative, 'I only see one resource for me, and however frightful it may appear, I will adopt it, not only without repugnance, but with eagerness, if their excellencies will be good enough to give their consent. It is that it should please them for me to pass the rest of my days in prison in one of their castles, or such other place in their states as they may think fit to select. I will there live at my own expense, and I will give security never to put them to any cost. I submit to be without paper or pen, or any communication from without, except so far as may be absolutely necessary, and through the channel of those who shall have charge of me; only let me have left, with the use of a few books, the liberty to walk occasionally in a garden, and I am content. Do not suppose that an expedient, so violent in appearance, is the fruit of despair. My mind is perfectly calm at this moment; I have taken time to think about it, and it is only after profound consideration that I have brought myself to this decision. Mark, I pray you, that if this is an extraordinary resolution, my situation is still more so. The distracted life that I have had to lead for several years without intermission, would be terrible for a man in

full health; judge what it must be for a miserable invalid worn down with weariness and misfortune, and who has now no wish but to die in peace.'[1]

That the request was made in all sincerity we may well believe. The difference between being in prison and being out of it was really not considerable, to a man who had the previous winter been confined to his chamber for eight months without a break.[2] In other respects the world was as cheerless as any prison could be. He was an exile from the only places he knew, and to him a land unknown was terrible. He had thought of Vienna, and the prince of Würtemberg had sought the requisite permission for him, but the priests were too strong in the court of the house of Austria.[3] Madame d'Houdetot offered him a resting place in Normandy, and Saint Lambert in Lorraine.[4] He thought of Potsdam. Rey, the printer, pressed him to go to Holland. He wondered if he should have strength to cross the Alps and make his way to Corsica. Eventually, he made up his mind to go to Berlin, and he went as far as Strasburg on his road thither.[5] Here he began to fear the rude climate of the northern capital, changed his plans, and resolved to accept the warm invitations

[1] *Corr.*, iv. 221. Oct. 20, 1765. [2] *Corr.*, iv. 136, etc. April 27, 1765.
[3] Streckeisen-Moultou, ii. 209, 212. [4] Streckeisen-Moultou, ii. 554.
[5] He arrived at Strasburg on the 2nd or 3rd of November, left it about the end of the first week in December, and arrived in Paris on the 16th of December, 1765. A sort of apocryphal tradition is said to linger in the island about Rousseau's last evening on the island, how after supper he called for a lute, and sang some passably bad verses. See M. Bougy's *J. J. Rousseau*, p. 179 (Paris: 1853).

which he had received to cross over to England. His friends used their interest to procure a passport for him,[1] and the prince of Conti offered him an apartment in the privileged quarter of the Temple, on his way through Paris. His own purpose seems to have been irresolute to the last, but his friends acted with such energy and bustle on his behalf, that the English scheme was adopted, and he found himself in Paris, on his way to London, almost before he had deliberately realised what he was doing. It was a step that led him into many fatal vexations, as we shall presently see. Meanwhile we may pause to examine the two considerable books which had involved his life in all this confusion and perplexity.

[1] Madame de Verdelin to J. J. R. Streckeisen, ii. 532. The minister even expressed his especial delight at being able to serve Rousseau, so little seriousness was there now in the formalities of absolutism. Ib., 547.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT.

THE dominant belief of the best minds of the latter half of the eighteenth century was a passionate faith in the illimitable possibilities of human progress. Nothing could in their eyes stay the ever upward movement of human perfectibility, short of a general overthrow of the planet. They differed as to the details of the philosophy of government which they deduced from this philosophy of society, but the conviction that a golden era of tolerance, enlightenment, and material prosperity was close at hand, belonged to them all. Rousseau set his face the other way. For him the golden era had passed away from our planet many centuries ago. Simplicity had fled from the earth. Wisdom and heroism had vanished from out of the minds of leaders. The spirit of citizenship had gone from those who should have upheld the social union in brotherly accord. The dream of human perfectibility which nerved men like Condorcet, was to Rousseau a sour and fantastic mockery. The utmost that men could do was to turn their eyes to the past, obliterate the interval, and try to walk for a space in the track

of the ancient societies. They would hardly succeed, but endeavour would at least do something to stay the plague of universal degeneracy. Hence the fatality of his system. It placed the centre of social activity elsewhere than in careful and rational examination of social conditions, and in careful and rational effort to modify them in accordance with principles which had been arrived at in this way. As we began by saying, it substituted a retrograde aspiration for direction, and emotion for the ascertainment of law. We can hardly wonder, when we think of the intense exaltation of spirit produced both by the perfectibilitarians and the followers of Rousseau, and at the same time of the political degradation and material disorder of France, that so violent a contrast between the ideal and the actual led to a great volcanic outbreak. The only hope of controlling the flood within serviceable bounds lay in the gradual ascendancy of a respect for reasoned exploration of the conditions of social improvement. Here, alas, is the crucial difficulty of political change, how to summon new force without destroying the sound parts of a structure which it has taken so many generations to erect. The Social Contract is the formal denial of the possibility of successfully overcoming the difficulty.

'Although man deprives himself in the civil state of many advantages which he holds from nature, yet he acquires in return others so great, his faculties exercise and develope themselves, his ideas extend, his sentiments are ennobled, his whole soul is raised to

such a degree, that if the abuses of this new condition did not so often degrade him below that from which he has emerged, he would be bound to bless without ceasing the happy moment which rescued him from it for ever, and out of a stupid and blind animal made an intelligent being and a man.'[1] The little parenthesis as to the frequent degradation produced by the abuses of the social condition, does not prevent us from recognising in the whole passage a tolerably complete surrender of the main position which was taken up in the two Discourses. The short treatise on the Social Contract is an inquiry into the just foundations and most proper form of that political society, which the Discourses showed to have its foundation in injustice, and to be incapable of receiving any form proper for the attainment of the full measure of human happiness.

Equality in the same way is no longer denounced, but accepted and defined. Locke's influence has begun to tell. The two principal objects of every system of legislation are declared to be liberty and equality, and by equality we are warned not to understand that the degrees of power and wealth should be absolutely the same, but that in respect of power, such power should be out of reach of any violence, and be invariably exercised in virtue of the laws; and in respect of riches, that no citizen should be wealthy enough to buy another, and none poor enough to sell himself. Do you say this equality is a mere chimera? It is precisely because the force of

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, I. viii.

things is constantly tending to destroy equality, that the force of legislation ought as constantly to be directed towards upholding it.[1] This is much clearer than the indefinite way of speaking which we have already noticed in the second Discourse, being neither more nor less than that equality before the law, which is one of the elementary marks of a perfectly free community. The idea of the law being constantly directed to counteract the tendencies to violent inequalities in material possessions among different members of a society, is too vague to be criticised. Does it cover and warrant so sweeping a measure as the old *seisachtheia* of Solon, voiding all contracts in which the debtor had pledged his land or his person; or such measures as the agrarian laws of Licinius and the Gracchi? Or is it to go no further than condemn such a law as that which in England gives unwilled realty to the eldest son? We can only criticise accurately a general idea of this sort in connection with specific projects in which it is applied. As it stands, it is no more than the expression of what the author thinks a wise principle of public policy. It assumes the existence of property just as completely as the theory of the most rigorous capitalist could do; and gives no encouragement, as the Discourse did, to the notion of an equality in being without property. There is no element of communism in a principle so stated, but it suggests a social

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, II. xi. He had written in much the same sense in his article on Political Economy in the Encyclopædia, p. 34.

ideal, based on the moral claim of men to have equality of opportunity. This ideal stamped itself on the minds of Robespierre and the other revolutionary leaders, and led to practical results in the sale of the church lands and the rest in small lots, so as to give the peasant a market to buy in. The effect of the economic change thus introduced happened to work in the direction in which Rousseau pointed, for it is now known that the most remarkable and most permanent of the consequences of the revolution in the ownership of land was the erection, between the two extreme classes of proprietors, of an immense body of middle-class freeholders. This state is not equality, but gradation, and there is undoubtedly an immense difference between the two. Still its origin is an illustration on the largest scale in history of the force of legislation being exerted to counteract an irregularity that had become unbearable.[1]

Notwithstanding the disappearance of the more extravagant elements of the old thesis, the new specu-

[1] Robespierre disclaimed the intention of attacking property, and took up a position like that of Rousseau—teaching the poor contempt for the rich, not envy. 'I do not want to touch your treasures,' he cried, on one occasion, 'however impure their source. It is far more an object of concern to me to make poverty honourable, than to proscribe wealth; the thatched hut of Fabricius never need envy the palace of Crassus. I should be at least as content, for my own part, to be one of the sons of Aristides, brought up in the Prytaneium at the public expense, as the heir presumptive of Xerxes, born in the mire of royal courts, to sit on a throne decorated by the abasement of the people, and glittering with the public misery.' Quoted in Malon's *Exposé des Ecoles Socialistes françaises*, 15. Babœuf carried Rousseau's sentiments further towards their natural conclusion by such propositions as these: 'The goal of the revolution is to destroy inequality, and to re-establish the happiness of all.' 'The revolution is not finished, because the rich absorb all the property, and hold exclusive power; while the poor toil like born slaves, languish in wretchedness, and are nothing in the state.' Ibid., p. 29.

lation was far from being purged of the fundamental errors that had given such popularity to its predecessors. 'If the sea,' he says in one place, 'bathes nothing but inaccessible rocks on your coasts, remain barbarous ichthyophagi; you will live all the more tranquilly for it, better, perhaps, and assuredly more happily.'[1] Apart from an outburst like this, the central idea remained the same, though it was approached from another side and with different objects. The picture of a state of nature had lost none of its perilous attraction, though it was hung in a slightly changed light. It remained the starting point of the right and normal constitution of civil society, just as it had been the starting point of the denunciation of civil society as incapable of right constitution, and as necessarily and for ever abnormal. Equally with the Discourses, the Social Contract is a repudiation of that historic method, which traces the present along a line of ascertained circumstances, and seeks an improved future in an unbroken continuation of this line. The opening words, which sent such a thrill through the generation to which they were uttered in two continents, 'Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains,' tell us at the outset that we are as far away as ever from the patient method of positive observation, and as deeply buried as ever in deducing practical maxims from a set of conditions which never had any other than an abstract and phantasmatic existence. How is a man born free? If he is born

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, II. xi.

into isolation, he perishes instantly. If he is born into a family, he is at the moment of his birth committed to a state of social relation, in however rudimentary a form; and the more or less of freedom which this state may ultimately permit to him, depends upon circumstances. Man was hardly born free among Romans and Athenians, when both law and public opinion left a father a perfect liberty to expose his new-born infant. And the more primitive the circumstances, the later the period at which he gains freedom. A child was not born free in the early days of the Roman state, when the *patria potestas* was a vigorous reality, nor to go yet further back, in the times of the Hebrew patriarchs, when Abraham had full right of sacrificing his son, and Jephthah of sacrificing his daughter. But to speak thus is to speak what we do know. Rousseau was not open to such testimony. 'My principles,' he said in contempt of Grotius, 'are not founded on the authority of poets; they come from the nature of things and are based on reason.'[1] He does indeed in one place express his reverence for the Judaic law, and administers a just rebuke to the philosophic arrogance which saw only successful impostors in the old legislators.[2] But he paid no attention to the processes and usages of which this law was the organic expression, nor did he allow himself to learn from it the actual conditions of the social state which accepted it. It was Locke, whose essay on civil government

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, I. iv. [2] *Cont. Soc.*, II. vii.

haunts us throughout the Social Contract, who had taught him that men are born free, equal, and independent, and Locke evaded the difficulty of the dependence of childhood by saying that when the son comes to the estate that made his father a freeman, he becomes a freeman too.[1] What of the old Roman use permitting a father to sell his son three times? In the same metaphysical spirit Locke had laid down the absolute proposition that 'conjugal society is made by a voluntary compact between man and woman.'[2] This is true of a small number of western societies in our own day, but what of the primitive usages of communal marriages, marriages by capture, purchase, and the rest? We do not mean it as any discredit to writers upon government in the seventeenth century that they did not make good the necessary want of knowledge about primitive communities out of their own consciousness; but it is necessary to point out, first, that they did not realise all the knowledge within their reach, and next that, as a consequence of this, their propositions had a quality that vitiated all their speculative worth. Filmer's contention that man is not naturally free, was truer than the position of Locke and Rousseau, and it was so because Filmer consulted and appealed to the most authentic of the historic records then accessible.[3]

[1] Ch. vi. (vol. v. 371; edit. 1801.) [2] Ch. vii. (p. 383.)

[3] Goguet, in his *Origine des Lois, des Arts, et des Sciences* (1758), really attempted, as laboriously as possible, to carry out a notion of the historical method, but the fact that history itself at that time had never been subjected to scientific

It is the more singular that Rousseau should have thus deliberately put aside all but the most arbitrary and empirical historical lessons, and it shows the extraordinary force with which men may be mastered by abstract prepossessions, even when they have a partial knowledge of the antidote; because Rousseau in several places not only admits, but insists upon, the necessity of making institutions relative to the state of the community, in respect of size, soil, manners, occupation, morality, character. 'It is in view of such relations as these that we must assign to each people a particular system, which shall be the best, not perhaps in itself, but for the state for which it is destined.'[1] In another place he calls attention to manners, customs, above all to opinion, as the part of a social system on which the success of all the rest depends; particular rules being only the arching of the vault, of which manners, though so much tardier in rising, form a key-stone that can never be disturbed.[2] This was excellent so far as it went, but it was one of the many great truths, which men may hold in their minds without appreciating their full value. He did not see that these manners, customs, opinions, have old roots which must be sought in a

examination, made his effort valueless. He accumulates testimony which would be excellent evidence, if only it had been sifted, and had come out of the process substantially undiminished. Yet, even Goguet, who thus carefully followed the accounts of early societies given in the bible and other monuments, intersperses abstract general statements about man being born free and independent (i. 25), and entering society as the result of deliberate reflection.

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, II. xi. Also III. viii. [2] II. xi. Also Ch. viii.

historic past; that they are connected with the constitution of human nature, and then in turn prepare modifications of that constitution. His narrow, symmetrical, impatient humour unfitted him to deal with the complex tangle of the history of social growths. It was essential to his mental comfort that he should be able to see a picture of perfect order and logical system at both ends of his speculation. Hence, he invented, to begin with, his ideal state of nature, and an ideal mode of passing from that to the social state; he swept away in his imagination the whole series of actual incidents between present and past; and he constructed a system which might be imposed upon all societies indifferently by a legislator summoned for that purpose, to wipe out existing uses, laws, and institutions, and make afresh a clear and undisturbed beginning of national life. The force of habit was slowly and insensibly to be substituted for that of the legislator's authority, but the existence of such habits previously as forces to be dealt with, and the existence of certain limits of pliancy in the conditions of human nature and social possibility, are facts of which the author of the Social Contract takes not the least account.

Rousseau knew hardly any history, and the few isolated pieces of old fact which he had picked up in his very slight reading, were exactly the most unfortunate that a student in need of the historic method could possibly have fallen in with. The illustrations which are scantily dispersed in his pages, and we

must remark that they are no more than illustrations for conclusions arrived at quite independently of them, and not the historical proof and foundations of his conclusions, are nearly all from the annals of the small states of ancient Greece, and from the earlier times of the Roman republic. We have already pointed out to what an extent his imagination was struck at the time of his first compositions by the tale of Lycurgus. The influence of the same notions is still paramount. The hopelessness of giving good laws to a corrupt people is supposed to be demonstrated by the case of Minos, whose legislation failed in Crete because the people for whom he made laws were sunk in vices; and by the further example of Plato, who refused to give laws to the Arcadians and Cyrenians, knowing that they were too rich and could never suffer equality.[1] The writer is thinking of Plato's Laws, when he says that just as nature has fixed limits to the stature of a well-formed man, outside of which she produces giants or dwarfs, so with reference to the best constitution for a state, there are bounds to its extent, so that it may be neither too large to be capable of good government, nor too small to be independent and self-sufficing. The further the social bond is extended, the more relaxed it becomes, and in general a small state is proportionally stronger than a large one.[2] In the remarks with which he proceeds to corroborate this position, we can plainly see that he is privately contrasting an independent

[1] II. viii. [2] II. ix.

Greek community with the unwieldy oriental monarchy against which at one critical period Greece had to contend, and that he had never realised the possibility of such forms of polity as the Roman Empire, or the half-federal dominion of England which took such enormous dimensions in his time, or the great confederation of states which came to birth two years before he died. He was the servant of his own metaphor, as the Greek writers so often were, and his argument that a state must be of a moderate size because the rightly shapen man is neither dwarf nor giant, is exactly on a par with Aristotle's argument to the same effect, on the ground that beauty demands size, and there must not be too great nor too small size, because a ship sails badly if it be either too heavy or too light.[1] And when Rousseau supposes the state to have ten thousand inhabitants, and in his remarks on size of territory,[2] who does not think of the five thousand and forty which the Athenian Stranger prescribed to Cleinias the Cretan as the exactly proper number for the perfectly formed state?[3] The prediction of the short career which awaits a state that is cursed with an extensive and accessible seaboard, corresponds precisely with the Athenian Stranger's satisfaction that the new city is to be eighty stadia from the coast.[4] When he himself began to think about the organization of Corsica, he praised the selection of Corte as the chief town of a patriotic

[1] *Politics*, VII. iv. 8, 10.
[2] *Cont. Soc.*, II. x.
[3] Plato's *Laws*, v. 737.
[4] *Laws*, iv. 705.

administration, because it was far from the sea, and so its inhabitants would long preserve their simplicity and uprightness.[1] And in later years still, when meditating upon a constitution for Poland, he propounded an economic system essentially Spartan; the people were enjoined to think little about foreigners, to give themselves little concern about commerce, to suppress stamped paper, and to put a tithe upon the land.[2] The chapter on the Legislator is in the same region. We are again referred to Lycurgus; and to the circumstance that Greek towns usually confided to a stranger the sacred task of drawing up their laws. His experience in Venice, and the history of his native town, supplemented the examples of Greece. Geneva summoned a stranger to legislate for her, and 'those who only look on Calvin as a theologian have a scanty idea of the extent of his genius; the preparation of our wise edicts, in which he had so large a part, do him as much honour as his Institutes.'[3] Rousseau's vision was too narrow to let him see the growth of government and laws as a co-ordinate process, flowing from the growth of all the other parts and organs of society, and advancing in more or less equal step along with them. He could begin with nothing short of an absolute legislator, who should impose a system from without by a single act, a structure hit upon once for all by his individual wisdom, not slowly wrought out by many minds, with popular assent and co-operation,

[1] *Projet de Constitution pour la Corse*, p. 75.
[2] *Gouvernement de Pologne*, ch. xi.
[3] *Cont. Soc.*, II. vii.

at the suggestion of changing social circumstances and need.[1]

All this would be of very trifling importance in the history of political literature, but for the extraordinary influence which circumstances ultimately bestowed upon it. The Social Contract was the gospel of the Jacobins, and the action of the supreme party in France during the first months of the year 1794 is only fully intelligible, when we look upon it as the result and practical application of Rousseau's teaching. The conception of the situation entertained by Robespierre and Saint Just was entirely moulded on all this talk about the legislators of Greece and Geneva. 'The transition of an oppressed nation to democracy is like the effort by which nature rose from nothingness to existence. You must entirely refashion a people whom you wish to make free—destroy its prejudices, alter its habits, limit its necessities, root up its vices, purify its desires. The state therefore must lay hold on every human being at his birth, and direct his education with powerful hand. Solon's weak confidence threw Athens into fresh slavery, while Lycurgus's severity founded the republic of Sparta on an immovable basis.'[2] These words, which came from a decree of the Committee of Public Safety, might well be taken for an excerpt from the Social Contract. The fragments of the institutions by which

[1] Goguet was much nearer to a true conception of this kind: see, for instance, *Origine des Lois*, i. 46.

[2] Decree of the committee, April 20, 1794, reported by Billaud-Varennes. Compare ch. iv. of Rousseau's *Considérations sur le Gouvernement de Pologne*.

Saint Just intended to regenerate his country, reveal a man with the example of Lycurgus before his eyes in every line he wrote.[1] When on the eve of the Thermidorian revolution which overthrew him and his party, he insisted on the necessity of a dictatorship, he was only thinking of the means by which he should at length obtain the necessary power for forcing his regenerating projects on the country; for he knew that Robespierre, whom he named as the man for the dictatorship, accepted his projects, and would lend the full force of the temporal arm to the propagation of ideas which they had acquired together from Jean Jacques, and from the Greeks to whom Jean Jacques had sent them for example and instruction.[2] No doubt the condition of France after 1792 must naturally have struck any one too deeply imbued with the spirit of the Social Contract to look beneath the surface of the society with which the Convention had to deal, as urgently inviting a lawgiver of the ancient stamp. All the old orders in church and state had been swept away,

[1] Here are some of Saint Just's regulations:—No servants, nor gold or silver vessels:—no child under 16 to eat meat, nor any adult to eat meat on three days of the decade:—boys at the age of 7 to be handed over to the school of the nation, where they were to be brought up to speak little, to endure hardships, and to train for war:—divorce to be free to all:—friendship ordained a public institution, every citizen on coming to majority being bound to proclaim his friends, and if he had none, then to be banished:—if one committed a crime, his friends were to be banished.—Quoted in Von Sybel's *Hist. French Rev.*, iv. 49. When Morelly dreamed his dream of a model community in 1754 (see above, vol. i. p. 160) he little supposed, one would think, that within forty years a man would be so near trying the experiment in France as Saint Just was.

[2] I forget where I have read the story of some member of the Convention being very angry, because the library contained no copy of the laws which Minos gave to the Cretans.

no organ for the performance of the functions of national life were visible, the moral ideas which had bound the social elements together in the extinct monarchy, seemed to be permanently sapped. A politician who had for years been dreaming about Minos and Lycurgus and Calvin, especially if he lived in a state with such a tradition of centralisation as ruled in France, was sure to suppose that here was the scene and the moment for a splendid repetition on an immense scale of those immortal achievements. The futility of the attempt was the practical and ever memorable illustration of the defect of Rousseau's geometrical method. It was one thing to make laws for the handful of people who lived in Geneva in the sixteenth century, united in religious faith, and accepting the same form and conception of the common good. It was a very different thing to try to play Calvin over some twenty-five millions of a heterogeneously composed nation, abounding in variations of temperament, faith, laws, and habits, and weltering in unfathomable distractions. The French did indeed at length invite a heaven-sent stranger from Corsica to make laws for them, but not until he had set his foot upon their neck; and then even he, who had begun life like the rest of his generation by writing Rousseauite essays, made a swift return to the historic method in the equivocal shape of the concordat.

Not only were Rousseau's schemes of polity conceived from the point of view of a small territory with a limited population. 'You must not,' he says in one

place, 'make the abuses of great states an objection to a writer who would fain have none but small ones.'[1] Again, when he said that in a truly free state the citizens performed all their services to the community with their arms and none by money, and that he looked upon the corvée (or compulsory labour on the public roads) as less hostile to freedom than taxes,[2] he showed that he was thinking of a state not greatly passing the dimensions of a parish. This was not the only defect of his schemes. They assumed a sort of state of nature in the minds of the people with whom the lawgiver had to deal. Saint Just made the same assumption afterwards, and trusted to his military school to erect on these bare plots whatever superstructure he might think fit to appoint. A society that had for so many centuries been organized and moulded by a powerful and energetic church, armed with a definite doctrine, fixing the same moral tendencies in a long series of successive generations, was not in the naked mental state which the Jacobins postulated, prepared to accept free divorce, the substitution of friendship for marriage, the displacement of the family by the military school, and the other articles in Saint Just's programme of social renovation. The twelve apostles went among people who were morally swept and garnished, and they went armed with instruments proper to seize the imagination of

[1] III. xiii.

[2] III. xv. He actually recommended the Poles to pay all public functionaries in kind, and to have the public works executed on the system of corvée. *Gouvernement de Pologne*, ch. xi.

their hearers. All moral reformers seek the ignorant and simple, poor fishermen in one scene, 'proletaries and women' in another, for the good reason that new ideas only make a way on ground that is not already too heavily encumbered with prejudices. But France in 1793 was in no condition of this kind. Opinion in all its spheres was deepened by an old and powerful organization, to a degree which made any attempt to abolish the opinion, as the organization appeared to have been abolished, quite hopeless until the lapse of three or four hundred years had allowed due time for dissolution. After all it was not until the fourth century of our era that the work of even the twelve apostles began to tell decisively and quickly. As for the Lycurgus of whom the French chattered, if such a personality ever existed out of the region of myth, he came to his people armed with an oracle from the gods, just as Moses did, and was himself regarded as having a nature touched with divinity. No such pretensions could well be made by any French legislator within a dozen years or so of the death of Voltaire.

Let us here remark that it was exactly what strikes us as the desperate absurdity of the assumptions of the Social Contract, which constituted the power of that work, when it accidentally fell into the hands of men who surveyed a national system wrecked in all its parts. The Social Contract is worked out precisely in that fashion which, if it touches men at all, makes them into fanatics. Long trains of reasoning, careful allegation of proofs, patient admission on every hand

of qualifying propositions and multitudinous limitations, are essential to science, and produce treatises that guide the wise statesman in normal times. But it is dogma that gives fervour to a sect. There are always large classes of minds to whom anything in the shape of a vigorously compact system is irresistibly fascinating, to whom the qualification of a proposition, or the limitation of a theoretic principle is distressing or intolerable. Such persons always come to the front for a season in times of distraction, when the party that knows its own aims most definitely, is sure to have the best chance of obtaining power. And Rousseau's method charmed their temperament. A man who handles sets of complex facts is necessarily slow-footed, but one who has only words to deal with, may advance with a speed, a precision, a consistency, a conclusiveness, that has a magical potency over men who insist on having politics and theology drawn out in exact theorems like those of geometry. Rousseau traces his conclusions from words, and developes his system from the interior germs of phrases. Like the typical schoolman, he assumes that analysis of terms is the right way of acquiring new knowledge about things, and mistakes the multiplication of propositions for the discovery of fresh truth. Many pages of the Social Contract are mere logical deductions from verbal definitions, which the slightest attempt to confront with actual fact would have shown to be not only valueless, but wholly meaningless, in connection with real human

nature and the visible working of human affairs. He looks into the word, or into his own verbal notion, and tells us what is to be found in that, whereas we need to be told the marks and qualities that distinguish the object which the word is meant to recall. Hence arises his habit of setting himself questions, with reference to which we cannot say that the answers are not true, but only that the questions themselves were never worth asking. Here is an instance of his method of supposing that to draw something from a verbal notion is to find out something corresponding to fact. 'We can distinguish in the magistrate three essentially different wills: 1st, the will peculiar to him as an individual, which only tends to his own particular advantage; 2nd, the common will of the magistrates, which refers only to the advantage of the prince [i.e. the government], and this we may name corporate will, which is general in relation to the government, and particular in relation to the state of which the government is a part; 3rd, the will of the people or sovereign will, which is general, as well in relation to the state considered as a whole, as in relation to the government considered as part of the whole.'[1] It might be hard to prove that all this is not true, but then it is unreal and comes to nothing, as we see if we take the trouble to turn it into real matter. Thus a member of the British house of commons, who is a magistrate in Rousseau's sense, has three essentially different wills: first, as a man, Mr.

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, III. ii.

So-and-so; second, his corporate will, as member of the chamber, and this will is general in relation to the legislature, but particular in relation to the whole body of electors and peers; third, his will as a member of the great electoral body, which is a general will alike in relation to the electoral body and to the legislature. An English publicist is perfectly welcome to make assertions of this kind, if he chooses to do so, and nobody will take the trouble to deny them. But they do not correspond to the real composition of a member of parliament, nor do they seem to shed the smallest light upon any part either of the theory of government in general, or the working of our own government in particular.

Almost the same kind of observation might be made of the famous dogmatic statements about sovereignty; as that 'sovereignty, being only the exercise of the general will, can never be alienated, and the sovereign, who is only a collective being, can only be represented by himself: the power may be transmitted, but not the will;'[1] that sovereignty is indivisible, not only in principle, but in object;[2] and the rest. We shall have to consider these remarks from another point of view. At present we refer to them as illustrating the character of the book, as consisting of a number of expansions of definitions, analysed as words, not compared with the facts of which the words are representatives. This way of treating political theory enabled the writer to assume an air of certitude and

[1] II. i. [2] II. ii.

precision, which led narrow deductive minds completely captive. Burke poured merited scorn on the application of geometry to politics and algebraic formulas to government, but it was just this seeming demonstration, this measured accuracy, that filled Rousseau's disciples with a supreme and undoubting confidence, which leaves the modern student of these schemes in amazement unspeakable. The thinness of Robespierre's ideas on government ceases to astonish us, when we remember that he had not trained himself to look upon it as the art of dealing with huge groups of conflicting interests, of hostile passions, of hardly reconcilable aims, of vehemently opposed forces, but had disciplined his political intelligence on such meagre and unsubstantial argumentation as this:—'Let us suppose the state composed of ten thousand citizens. The sovereign can only be considered collectively and as a body; but each person, in his quality as subject, is considered as an individual unit; thus the sovereign is to the subject as ten thousand is to one; in other words, each member of the state has for his share only the ten-thousandth part of the sovereign authority, though he is submitted to it in all his own entirety. If the people be composed of a hundred thousand men, the condition of the subjects does not change, and each of them bears equally the whole empire of the laws, while his suffrage, reduced to a hundred-thousandth, has ten times less influence in drawing them up. Then, the subject remaining still only one, the relation of the sovereign augments

in the ratio of the number of the citizens. Whence it follows that, the larger the state becomes, the more does liberty diminish.'[1]

Apart from these arithmetical conceptions, and the deep charm which their assurance of expression had for the narrow and fervid minds of which England and Germany seem to have got finally rid in anabaptists and fifth monarchy men, but which haunted and still haunt France, there were maxims in the Social Contract of remarkable convenience for the members of a committee of public safety. 'How can a blind multitude,' the writer asks in one place, 'which so often does not know its own will, because it seldom knows what is good for it, execute of itself an undertaking so vast and so difficult as a system of legislation?'[2] Again, 'As nature gives to each man an absolute power over all his members, so the social pact gives to the body politic an absolute power over all its members; and it is this same power which, when directed by the general will, bears, as I have said, the name of sovereignty.'[3] Above all, the little chapter on a dictatorship is the very foundation of the position of the Robespierrists in the few months immediately preceding their fall. 'It is evidently the first intention of the people that the state should not perish,' and so on, with much criticism of the system of occasional dictatorships, as they were resorted to in old Rome.[4] Yet this does not in itself go much beyond the old monarchic doctrine of prerogative, as

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, III. i. [2] II. vi. [3] II. iv. [4] IV. vi.

a corrective for the slowness and want of immediate applicability of mere legal processes in cases of state emergency, and it is worth noticing that in spite of the shriekings of reaction, the few atrocities of the Terror are an almost invisible speck compared with the atrocities of christian churchmen and lawful kings, perpetrated in accordance with their notion of what constituted public safety. And, as far as Rousseau's intention goes, we find in his writings one of the strongest denunciations of the doctrine of public safety that is to be found in any of the writings of the century. 'Is the safety of a citizen,' he cries, 'less the common cause than the safety of the state? They may tell us that it is well that one should perish on behalf of all. I will admire such a sentence in the mouth of a virtuous patriot, who voluntarily and for duty's sake devotes himself to death for the salvation of his country. But if we are to understand that it is allowed to the government to sacrifice an innocent person for the safety of the multitude, I hold this maxim for one of the most execrable that tyranny has ever invented, and the most dangerous that can be admitted.'[1] It may be said that the Terrorists did not sacrifice innocent life, but the plea is frivolous on the lips of men who proscribed whole classes. You cannot justly draw a capital indictment against a class. Rousseau, however, cannot fairly be said to have had a share in the responsibility for the more criminal part of the policy of 1793, any more than the founder

[1] *Economie Politique*, p. 30.

of christianity is responsible for the atrocities that have been committed by the more ardent worshippers of his name, and justified by stray texts caught up from the gospels. Helvétius had said, 'All becomes legitimate and even virtuous on behalf of the public safety.' Rousseau wrote in the margin, 'The public safety is nothing, unless all the individuals enjoy security.' [1] The author of a theory is not answerable for the applications which may be read into it by the passions of men and the exigencies of situation. Such applications show this much and no more, that the theory was constructed with an imperfect consideration of the qualities of human nature, with too narrow a view of the conditions of society, and therefore with an inadequate appreciation of the consequences which the theory may be drawn to support.

It is time to come to the central conception of the Social Contract, the dogma which made of it for a time the gospel of a nation, the memorable doctrine of the sovereignty of peoples. Of this doctrine Rousseau was assuredly not the inventor, though the exaggerated language of some popular writers in France leads us to suppose that they think of him as nothing less. Even in the thirteenth century the constitution of the orders, and the contests of the friars with the clergy, had engendered faintly democratic ways of thinking, and among others the great Aquinas had protested against the juristic doctrine that the law is the pleasure of the

[1] *Mélanges*, p. 310.

prince. The will of the prince, he says, to be a law must be directed by reason; law is appointed for the common good, and not for a special or private good: it follows from this that only the reason of the multitude, or of a prince representing the multitude, can make a law.[1] A still more remarkable approach to later views was made by Marsilio of Padua, physician to Lewis of Bavaria, who wrote a strong book (1324) on his master's side, in the great contest between him and the pope. Marsilio in the first part of his work not only lays down very elaborately the proposition that laws ought to be made by the '*universitas civium*,' but places this sovereignty of the people on the true basis (which Rousseau only took for a secondary support to his original compact), namely, the greater likelihood of laws being obeyed in the first place, and being good laws in the second, when they are made by the body of the persons affected, because 'no one knowingly does hurt to himself, or deliberately asks what is unjust, and on that account all or a great majority must wish such law as best suits the common interest of the citizens.'[2] Turning from this to the Social Contract, or to Locke's essay on Government,

[1] *Summa*, xc.—cviii. (1265—73.) See Maurice's *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, i. 627—8. Also Franck's *Réformateurs et Publicistes de l'Europe*, p. 48, etc.

[2] *Defensor Pacis*, Pt. I., ch. xii. This, again, is an example of Marsilio's position: —'Convenerunt enim homines ad civilem communicationem propter commodum et vitæ sufficientiam consequendam, et opposita declinandum. Quæ igitur omnium tangere possunt commodum et incommodum, ab omnibus sciri debent et audiri, ut commodum assequi et oppositum repellere possint.' The whole chapter is a most interesting anticipation, partly due to the influence of Aristotle, of the notions of later centuries.

the identity in doctrine and correspondence in dialect may teach us how little veritable originality there can be among thinkers who are in the same stage, how a metaphysician of the thirteenth century and a metaphysician of the eighteenth hit on the same doctrine, and how the true classification of thinkers does not follow intervals of time, but is fixed by differences of method. It is impossible that in the constant play of circumstances and ideas in the minds of different thinkers, the same combinations of form and colour in a philosophic arrangement of such circumstances and ideas should not ever and again recur. Signal novelties in thought are as limited as signal inventions in architectural construction. It is only one of the great changes in method, that can remove the limits of the old combinations, by bringing new material and fundamentally altering the point of view.

In the sixteenth century there were numerous writers who declared the right of subjects to depose a bad sovereign, but this position is to be distinguished from Rousseau's doctrine. Thus if we turn to the great historic event of 1581, the rejection of the yoke of Spain by the Dutch, we find the Declaration of Independence running, 'that if a prince is appointed by God over the land, it is to protect them from harm, even as a shepherd to the guardianship of his flock. The subjects are not appointed by God for the behoof of the prince, but the prince for his subjects, without whom he is no prince.' This is obviously divine right, modified by a popular principle,

accepted to meet the exigencies of the occasion, and justify after the event a measure which was dictated by urgent need for practical relief. Such a notion of the social compact was still emphatically in the semi-patriarchal stage, and is as distinct as can be from the dogma of popular sovereignty, as Rousseau understood it. But it plainly marked a step on the way. It was the development of protestant principles, which produced and necessarily involved the extreme democratic conclusion. Time was needed for their full expansion in this sense, but the result could only have been avoided by a suppression of the reformation, and we therefore count it inevitable. Bodin (1577) had defined sovereignty as residing in the supreme legislative authority, without further inquiry as to the source or seat of that authority, though he admits the vague position which even Lewis XIV. did not deny, that the object of political society is the greatest good of every citizen or the whole state. In 1603 a protestant professor of law in Germany, Althusen by name, published a treatise of Politics, in which the doctrine of the sovereignty of peoples was clearly formulated, to the profound indignation both of jesuits and of protestant jurists.[1] Rousseau mentions his name;[2] it does not appear that he read his rather uncommon treatise, but its teaching would probably have a place in the traditions of political theorizing current at Geneva, to the spirit of whose

[1] See Bayle's Dict., s. v. *Althusius*.
[2] *Lettres de la Montagne*, I. vi. 388.

government it was so congenial. Hooker, vindicating episcopacy against the democratic principles of the puritans, had still been led, apparently by way of the ever dominant idea of a law natural, to base civil government on the assent of the governed, and had laid down such propositions as these: 'Laws they are not, which public approbation hath not made so,' 'Laws therefore human, of what kind soever, are available by consent,' and so on.[1] The views of the Ecclesiastical Polity were adopted by Locke, and became the foundation of the famous essay on Civil Government, from which popular leaders in our own country drew all their weapons down to the outbreak of the French Revolution. Grotius (1625) starting from the principle that the law of nature enjoins that we should stand by our agreements, then proceeded to assume either an express, or at any rate a tacit and implied, promise on the part of all who become members of a community, to obey the majority of the body, or a majority of those to whom authority has been delegated.[2] This is a unilateral view of the social contract, and omits the element of reciprocity which in Rousseau's idea was cardinal.

Locke was Rousseau's most immediate inspirer, and the latter affirmed himself to have treated the same

[1] *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. i.; bks. i.—iv., 1594; bk. v., 1597; bks. vi.—viii., 1647,—being forty-seven years after the author's death.

[2] Goguet (*Origine des Lois*, i. 22) dwells on tacit conventions, as a kind of engagement to which men commit themselves with extreme facility. He was thus rather near the true idea of the spontaneous origin and unconscious acceptance of early institutions.

matters exactly on Locke's principles. Rousseau, however, exaggerated Locke's politics as greatly as Condillac exaggerated his metaphysics. There was the important difference that Locke's essay on Civil Government was the justification in theory, of a revolution which had already been accomplished in practice, while the Social Contract, tinged as it was by silent reference in the mind of the writer to Geneva, was yet a speculation in the air. The circumstances under which it was written, gave to the propositions of Locke's piece a reserve and moderation which savour of a practical origin and a special case. They have not the wide scope and dogmatic air and literary precision of the corresponding propositions in Rousseau. We find in them none of those concise phrases which make fanatics. But the essential doctrine is there. The philosopher of the revolution of 1688 probably carried its principles further than most of those who helped in the revolution had any intention to carry them, when he said that 'the legislature being only a fiduciary power to act for certain ends, there remains still in the people a supreme power to remove or alter the legislative.'[1] It may be

[1] Of Civil Government, Ch. xiii. See also Ch. xi. 'This legislative is not only the supreme power of the commonwealth, but sacred and unalterable in the hands where the community have once placed it; nor can any edict of anybody else, in what form soever conceived, or by what power soever backed, have the force and obligation of a law, which has not its sanction from that legislative which the public has chosen and appointed; for without this the law could not have that which is absolutely necessary to its being a law—the consent of the society; over whom nobody can have a power to make laws but by their own consent, and by authority received from them.' If Rousseau had found no neater expression for his doctrine than this, the Social Contract would assuredly have been no explosive.

questioned how many of the peers of that day would have assented to the proposition that the people—and did Locke mean by the people the electors of the House of Commons, or all males over twenty-one, or all householders paying rates?—could by any expression of their will abolish the legislative power of the upper chamber, or put an end to the legislative and executive powers of the crown. But Locke's statements are direct enough, though he does not use so terse a label for his doctrine as Rousseau affixed to it.

Again, besides the principle of popular sovereignty, Locke most likely gave Rousseau the idea of the origin of this sovereignty in the civil state in a pact or contract, which was represented as the foundation and first condition of the civil state. From this naturally flowed the connected theory, of a perpetual consent being implied as given by the people to each new law. We need not quote passages from Locke to demonstrate the substantial correspondence of assumption between him and the author of the Social Contract. They are found in every chapter.[1] Such principles were indispensable for the defence of a revolution like that of 1688, which was always carefully marked out by its promoters, as well as by its eloquent apologist and expositor a hundred years later, as above all things a revolution within the pale of the law or the constitution. They represented the philosophic adjustment of popular ideas to the political changes wrought by shifting circumstances, as distinguished from the

[1] See especially Ch. viii.

biblical or Hebraic method of adjusting such ideas, which had prevailed in the contests of the previous generation.

Yet there was in the midst of those contests one thinker of the first rank in intellectual power, who had constructed a genuine philosophy of government. Hobbes's speculations did not fit in with the theory of either of the two bodies of combatants in the civil war. They were each in the theological order of ideas, and neither of them sought or was able to comprehend the application of philosophic principles to their own case or to that of their adversaries.[1] Hebrew precedents and bible texts, on the one hand; prerogative of use, and high church doctrine, on the other. Between these, no space for the acceptance of a secular and rationalistic theory, covering the whole field of a social constitution. Now the influence of Hobbes upon Rousseau was very marked, and very singular. It resulted in a curious fusion between the premisses and the temper of Hobbes, and the conclusions of Locke, and this fusion produced that popular absolutism of which the Social Contract was the theoretical expression, and Jacobin supremacy the practical manifestation. Rousseau borrowed from Hobbes the true conception of sovereignty, and from Locke the true conception of the ultimate seat and original of authority, and of the two together he made the great image of the sovereign people. Strike the crowned

[1] Hence the antipathy of the clergy, catholic, episcopalian, and presbyterian, to which, as Austin has pointed out (*Syst. of Jurisprudence*, i. 288, n.), Hobbes mainly owes his bad repute.

head from that monstrous figure which is the frontispiece of the Leviathan, and you have a frontispiece that will do excellently well for the Social Contract. Apart from a multitude of other obligations, good and bad, which Rousseau owed to Hobbes, as we shall point out, we may here mention that of the superior accuracy of the notion of law in the Social Contract over the notion of law in Montesquieu's work. The latter begins, as everybody knows, with a definition inextricably confused: 'Laws are necessary relations flowing from the nature of things, and in this sense all beings have their laws; divinity has its laws, the material world has its laws, the intelligences superior to men have their laws, the beasts have their laws, man has his laws. . . There is a primitive reason, and laws are the relations to be found between that and the different beings, and the relations of these different beings among one another.'[1] Rousseau at once put aside these divergent meanings, made the proper distinction between a law of nature and the imperative law of a state, and justly asserted that the one could teach us nothing worth knowing about the other.[2] Hobbes's phraseology is much less definite than this, and shows that he had not himself wholly shaken off the same confusion as reigned in Montesquieu's account a century later. But then Hobbes's account of the true meaning of sovereignty was so clear, firm, and comprehensive, as easily to lead any fairly perspicuous student who followed him, to apply it to the true meaning

[1] *Esprit des Lois*, I. i. [2] *Cont. Soc.*, II. vi. 50.

of law. And on this head of law not so much fault is to be found with Rousseau, as on the head of larger constitutional theory. He did not look long enough at given laws, and hence failed to seize all their distinctive qualities; above all he only half saw, if he saw at all, that a law is a command and not a contract, because the true view was incompatible with his fundamental assumption of contract as the base of the social union.[1] But he did at all events grasp the quality of generality as belonging to laws proper, and separated them justly from what he calls decrees, and which we are now taught to name occasional or particular commands.[2] This is worth mentioning, because it shows that, in spite of his habits of intellectual laxity, Rousseau was capable, where he had a clear-headed master before him, of a very considerable degree of precision of thought, always, however, liable to fall into error or deficiency for want of abundant comparison with bodies of external fact. Let us now proceed to some of the central propositions of the Social Contract.

1. The origin of society dates from the moment when the obstacles which impede the preservation of men in a state of nature, are too strong for such forces as each individual can employ in order to keep himself in that state. At this point, they can only save themselves by aggregation. Problem: to find a form of

[1] Goguet has the merit of seeing distinctly that command is the essence of law.

[2] *Cont. Soc.*, II. vi. 51—3. See Austin's *Jurisprudence*, i. 95, etc.; also *Lettres écrites de la Montagne*, I. vi. 380—1.

association which defends and protects with the whole common force the person and property of each associate, and by which, each uniting himself to all, still only obeys himself, and remains as free as he was before. Solution: a social compact reducible to these words, 'Each of us places in common his person and his whole power under the supreme direction of the general will; and we further receive each member as indivisible part of the whole.' This act of association constitutes a moral and collective body, a public person.

The practical importance and the mischief of thus suffering society to repose on conventions which the human will had made, lay in the corollary that the human will was competent at any time to unmake them, and so to devise all possible changes that fell short of unmaking them. This was the root of the fatal hypothesis of the dictator, or divinely commissioned lawgiver. External circumstance and human nature alike were passive and infinitely pliable, the material out of which the legislator was to devise conventions at pleasure, without apprehension as to their suitableness either to the conditions of society among which they were to work, or to the passions and interests of those by whom they were to be carried out, and who were supposed to have given assent to them. It would be unjust to say that Rousseau actually faced this position and took the consequences. He expressly says in more places than one that the science of government is only a science of combina-

tions, applications, and exceptions, according to time, place, and circumstance.[1] But to base society on conventions is to impute an element of arbitrariness to these combinations and applications, irrespective of the limits inexorably fixed by the nature of things. The notion of compact is the main source of all the worst vagaries in Rousseau's political speculation.

It is worth remarking in the history of opinion, that there was at this time in France a little knot of thinkers who were nearly in full possession of the true view of the limits set by the natural ordering of societies to the power of convention and the function of the legislators. Five years after the publication of the Social Contract, a remarkable book was written by one of the economic sect of the physiocrats, the later of whom, though specially concerned with the material interests of communities, very properly felt the necessity of connecting the discussion of wealth with the assumption of certain fundamental political conditions, because it is impossible to settle any question about wages or profits, for instance, until you have first settled whether you are assuming the principles of liberty and property. This writer with great consistency found the first essential of all social order in conformity of positive law and institution to those qualities of human nature, and their relations with those material instruments of life, which, and not convention, were the true origin, as they are the actual grounds, of the perpetuation of

[1] See, for instance, letter to Mirabeau (*l'ami des hommes*), July 26, 1767. *Corr.*, v. 179. The same letter contains his criticism on the good despot of the Economists.

our societies.[1] This was wiser than Rousseau's conception of the lawgiver as one who should change human nature, and take away from man the forces that are naturally his own, to replace them by others comparatively foreign to him.[2] He once wrote, in a letter about Rivière's book, that the great problem in politics, which might be compared with the quadrature of the circle in geometry, is to find a form of government which shall place law above man.[3] A more important problem, and not any less difficult for the political theorizer, is to mark the bounds at which the authority of the law is powerless or mischievous in attempting to control the egoistic or non-social parts of man. This problem Rousseau ignored, and that he

[1] *L'Ordre Naturel et Essentiel des Sociétés Politiques* (1767). By Mercier de la Rivière. One episode in the life of Mercier de la Rivière is worth recounting, as closely connected with the subject we are discussing. Just as Corsicans and Poles applied to Rousseau, Catherine of Russia, in consequence of her admiration for La Rivière's book, summoned him to Russia to assist her in making laws. 'Sir,' said the czarina, 'could you point out to me the best means for the good government of a state?' 'Madame, there is only one way, and that is being just; in other words, in keeping order and exacting obedience to the laws.' 'But on what base is it best to make the laws of an empire repose?' 'There is only one base, madame: the nature of things and of men.' 'Just so; but when you wish to give laws to a people, what are the rules which indicate most surely such laws as are most suitable?' 'To give or make laws, madame, is a task that God has left to none. Ah, who is the man that should think himself capable of dictating laws for beings that he does not know, or knows so ill? And by what right can he impose laws on beings whom God has never placed in his hands?' 'To what, then, do you reduce the science of government?' 'To studying carefully, recognising, and setting forth, the laws which God has graven so manifestly in the very organization of men, when he called them into existence. To wish to go any further would be a great misfortune and a most destructive undertaking.' 'Sir, I am very pleased to have heard what you have to say; I wish you good day.'—Quoted from Thiébault's *Souvenirs de Berlin*, in M. Daire's edition of the *Physiocrates*, ii. 432.

[2] *Cont. Soc.*, II. vii.

[3] *Corr.*, v. 181.

should do so was only natural in one who believed that man had bound himself by a convention, strictly to suppress his egoistic and non-social parts, and who based all his speculation on this pact as against the force, or the paternal authority, or the will of a supreme being, in which other writers founded the social union.

2. The body thus constituted by convention is the sovereign. Each citizen is a member of the sovereign, standing in a definite relation to individuals qua individuals; he is also as an individual a member of the state and subject to the sovereign, of which from the first point of view he is a component element. The sovereign and the body politic are one and the same thing.[1]

Of the antecedents and history of this doctrine enough has already been said. Its general truth as a description either of what is, or what ought to be and will be, demands an ampler discussion than there is any occasion to conduct here. We need only point out its place as an intermediate dissolvent for which the time was most ripe, breaking up the feudal conception of political authority as a property of land-ownership, noble birth, and the like, and associating it widely and simply with the bare fact of participation in any form of citizenship in the social union. The later and higher idea of every share of political power as a function to be discharged for the good of the whole body, and not merely as a right to be enjoyed for the advantage of its possessor, was a form of thought to

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, I. v., vi., vii.

which Rousseau did not rise. This does not lessen the effectiveness of the blow which his doctrine dealt to French feudalism, and which is its main title to commemoration in connection with his name.

The social compact thus made is essentially different from the social compact which Hobbes described as the origin of what he calls commonwealths by institution, to distinguish them from commonwealths by acquisition, that is to say, states formed by conquest or resting on hereditary rule. 'A commonwealth,' Hobbes says, 'is said to be instituted when a multitude of men do agree and covenant, every one with every one, that to whatsoever man or assembly of men shall be given by the major part the right to present the person of them all, that is to say, to be their representative; every one . . shall authorise all the actions and judgments of that man or assembly of men, in the same manner as if they were his own, to the end to live peaceably among themselves, and be protected against other men.'[1] But Rousseau's compact was an act of association among equals, who also remained equals. Hobbes's compact was an act of surrender on the part of the many to one or a number. The first was the constitution of civil society, the second was the erection of a government. As nobody now believes in the existence of any such compact in either one form or the other, it would be superfluous to inquire which of the two is the less inaccurate. All we need do is to point out that there was this

[1] *Leviathan*, II., Ch. xviii., Vol. iii. 159 (Molesworth's edition).

difference. Rousseau distinctly denied the existence of any element of contract in the erection of a government; there is only one contract in the state, he said, and it is that of association.[1] Locke's notion of the compact which was the beginning of every political society, is indefinite on this point; he speaks of it indifferently as an agreement of a body of free men to unite and incorporate into a society, and an agreement to set up a government.[2] Most of us would suppose the two processes to be as nearly identical as may be; Rousseau drew a distinction, and from his distinction he derived further differences.

Here, we may remark, is the starting point in the history of the ideas of the revolution, of one of the most prominent of them all, that of fraternity. If the whole structure of society rests on an act of partnership entered into by equals on behalf of themselves and their descendants for ever, the nature of the union is not what it would be, if the members of the union had only entered it to place their liberties at the feet of some superior power. Society in the one case is a covenant of subjection, in the other a covenant of social brotherhood. This impressed itself deeply on the feelings of men like Robespierre, who were never so well pleased as when they could find for their sentimentalism a covering of neat political logic. The same idea of association came presently to receive a still more remarkable and momentous extension, when it was translated from the language of mere government

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, III. xvi. [2] *Civil Government*, Ch. viii. § 99.

into that of the economic organization of communities. Rousseau's conception went no further than political association, as distinct from subjection. Socialism, which came by and by to the front place, carried the idea to its fullest capacity, and presented all the relations of men with one another as fixed by the same bond. Men had entered the social union as brethren, equal, and co-operators, not merely for purposes of government, but for purposes of mutual succour in all its aspects, including the most important of all, material production. They were not associated merely as equal participants in political sovereignty, but as equal participants in all the rest of the increase made to the means of human happiness by united action. Socialism is the transfer of the principle of fraternal association from politics, where Rousseau left it, to the wider sphere of industrial force.

It is perhaps worth notice that another famous revolutionary term belongs to the same source. All the associates of this act of union, becoming members of the city, are as such to be called citizens, as participating in the sovereign authority.[1] The term was in familiar use enough among the French in their worst days, but it was Rousseau's sanction which marked it in the new times with a sort of sacramental stamp. It came naturally to him, because it was the name of the first of the two classes which constituted the active portion of the republic of Geneva, and the only class whose members were eligible to the chief magistracies.

[1] I. vi. Especially the foot-note.

3. We next have a group of propositions setting forth the attributes of sovereignty. It is inalienable.[1] This follows from the fact that sovereignty is the exercise of the general will, and that the collective being which constitutes the sovereign, can only be represented by itself. Power may be transmitted, but not will. If a people promises simply to obey, it dissolves itself by the very act; the moment there is a master, there is no longer a people. This of course is no more than a consequence already contained in the original definition. Secondly, the sovereignty is indivisible. The publicists who split sovereignty into legislative power and executive power, into right of taxation, of peace and war, of judiciary, into home administration and dealings with foreign powers, are like one who should divide a man into a number of bodies, one with eyes, another with arms, a third with feet, and nothing besides. All this comes of mistaking for parts of the sovereign authority, what are in truth only emanations from it. The rights that people take for parts of this sovereignty, are all subordinate to it, and always imply supreme wills to which these rights only give execution.[2]

These two propositions, which play such a part in the history of some of the episodes of the French Revolution, contain no more than was contended for by Hobbes, and has been accepted in our own times

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, II. i.

[2] II. ii. 'The sovereignty resides in the people, it is one and indivisible, imprescriptible, and inalienable.'—Robespierre's *Déclaration des droits de l'homme*, § 25.

by Austin. When Hobbes says that 'to the laws which the sovereign maketh, the sovereign is not subject, for if he were subject to the civil laws he were subject to himself, which were not subjection but freedom,' his notion of sovereignty is exactly that expressed by Rousseau in his unexplained dogma of the inalienableness of sovereignty. So Rousseau means no more by the dogma that sovereignty is indivisible, than Austin meant when he declared of the doctrine that the legislative sovereign powers and the executive sovereign powers belong in any society to distinct parties, that it is a supposition too palpably false to endure a moment's examination.[1] The way in which this account of the indivisibleness of sovereignty was understood during the revolution, twisted it into a condemnation of the dreaded idea of federalism. It might just as well have been interpreted to condemn alliances between nations; for the properties of sovereignty are clearly independent of the dimensions of the sovereign unit. Another effect of this doctrine was the rejection by the Constituent Assembly of the balanced parliamentary system, which the followers of Montesquieu would fain have introduced on the English model. Whether that was an evil or a good, publicists will long continue to dispute.

4. The general will of the sovereign upon an object of common interest is expressed in a law. Only the sovereign can possess this law-making power, because no one but the sovereign has the right of declaring

[1] *Syst. of Jurisprudence*, i. 256.

the general will. The legislative power cannot be exerted by delegation or representation. The English fancy that they are a free nation, but they are grievously mistaken. They are only free during the election of members of parliament; the members once chosen, the people are slaves, nay, as people they have ceased to exist.[1] It is impossible for the sovereign to act, except when the people are assembled. Besides such extraordinary assemblies as unforeseen events may call for, there must be fixed periodical meetings that nothing can interrupt or postpone. Do you call this chimerical? Then you have forgotten the Roman comitia, as well as such gatherings of the people as those of the Macedonians and the Franks and most other nations in their

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, III. xv. 137. It was not long, however, before Rousseau found reason to alter his opinion in this respect. The champions of the Council at Geneva compared the *droit négatif*, in the exercise of which the Council had refused to listen to the representations of Rousseau's partisans (see above, p. 103), to the right of veto possessed by the crown in Great Britain. Rousseau seized upon this egregious blunder, which confused the power of refusing assent to a proposed law, with the power of refusing justice under law already passed. He at once found illustrations of the difference, first in the case of the printers of No. 45 of the *North Briton*, who brought actions for false imprisonment (1763), and next in the proceedings against Wilkes at the same time. If Wilkes, said Rousseau, had written, printed, published, or said, one-fourth against the lesser Council at Geneva of what he said, wrote, printed, and published openly in London against the court and the government, he would have been heavily punished, and most likely put to death. And so forth, until he has proved very pungently how different degrees of freedom are enjoyed in Geneva and in England.—*Lettres écrites de la Montagne*, ix. 491—500. When he wrote this he was unaware that the Triennial Act had long been replaced by the Septennial Act of the 1 Geo. I. On finding out, as he did afterwards, that a parliament could sit for seven years, he thought as meanly of our liberty as ever.—*Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne*, Ch. vii. 253, 260. In his *Projet de Constitution pour la Corse*, p. 113, he says that 'the English do not love liberty for itself, but because it is most favourable to money-making.'

primitive times. What has existed is certainly possible.[1]

It is very curious that Rousseau in this part of his subject should have contented himself with going back to Macedonia and Rome, instead of pointing to the sovereign states that have since become confederate with his native republic. A historian in our own time has described with an enthusiasm that equals that of the Social Contract, how he saw the sovereign people of Uri and the sovereign people of Appenzell discharge the duties of legislation and choice of executive, each in the majesty of its corporate person.[2] That Rousseau was influenced by the free sovereignty of the states forming the confederation, as well as by that of his own city, we may well believe. Whether he was or not, it must always be counted a serious misfortune that a writer who was destined to exercise such power in a crisis of the history of a great nation, should have chosen his illustrations from a time and from societies so remote, that the true conditions of their political system could not possibly, in the backward state of contemporary criticism of the past, be understood with any approach to reality, while there were, within a few leagues of his native place, communities where the system of a sovereign public in his own sense was actually alive and flourishing and at work, and from which the full meaning of his theories might have been practically gathered, and whatever useful

[1] III., xi., xii., and xiii.

[2] Mr. Freeman's *Growth of the English Constitution*, c. i.

lessons lay at the bottom of them have been made plain. As it was, it came to pass singularly enough that the effect of the French Revolution was the suppression, happily only for a time, of the only governments in Europe where the doctrine of the favourite apostle of the Revolution was a reality. The constitution of the Helvetic republic in 1798 was as bad a blow to the sovereignty of peoples in a true sense, as the old house of Austria or Charles of Burgundy could ever have dealt. That constitution, moreover, was directly opposed to the Social Contract in setting up what it called representative democracy, for representative democracy was just what Rousseau steadily maintained to be a nullity and a delusion.

The only lesson which the Social Contract contained for a statesman bold enough to take into his hands the reconstruction of France, undoubtedly pointed in the direction of confederation. At one place, where he became sensible of the impotence which his assumption of a small state inflicted on his whole speculation, Rousseau said he would presently show how the good order of a small state might be united to the external power of a great people, and though he never did this, he hints in a foot-note that his plan belonged to the theory of confederations, of which the principles were still to be established.[1] When he gave advice

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, III. xv. 140. A small manuscript containing his ideas on confederation was given by Rousseau to the count d'Antraigues (afterwards an *émigré*), who destroyed it in 1789, lest its arguments should be used to sap the royal authority. See extract from his pamphlet, prefixed to M. Auguis's edition of the Social Contract, pp. xxiii—iv.

for the renovation of the wretched constitution of Poland, he insisted above all things that they should apply themselves to extend and perfect the system of federate governments, 'the only one that unites in itself all the advantages of great and small states.'[1] A very few years after the appearance of his book, the great American union of sovereign states arose to point this political moral. The French revolutionists missed the force alike of the practical example abroad, and of the theory of the book which they took for gospel at home. How far they were driven to this by the urgent pressure of foreign war, or whether they would have followed the same course without that interference, merely in obedience to the catholic and monarchic absolutism which had sunk so much deeper into French character than people have been willing to admit, we cannot tell. The fact remains that the Jacobins, Rousseau's immediate disciples, at once took up the chain of centralised authority where it had been broken off by the ruin of the monarchy. They caught at the letter of the dogma of a sovereign people, and lost its spirit. They missed the germ of truth in Rousseau's scheme, namely, that for order and freedom and just administration the unit of a state should not be too large to admit of the participation of the persons concerned, in the management of their own public affairs. If they had realised this and applied it, either by transforming the old monarchy into a confederacy of sovereign provinces,

[1] *Gouvernement de Pologne*, v. 246.

or by some less sweeping modification of the old centralised scheme of government, they might have saved France.[1] But, once more, men interpret a political treatise on principles which either come to them by tradition, or else spring suddenly up from roots of passion.[2]

5. The government is the minister of the sovereign. It is an intermediate body set up between sovereign and subjects for their mutual correspondence, charged with the execution of the laws and the maintenance of civil and political freedom. The members comprising it are called magistrates or kings, and to the whole body so composed, whether of one or of more than one, is given the name of prince. If the whole power is centred in the hands of a single magistrate, from whom all the rest hold their authority, the government is called a monarchy. If there are more persons simply citizens than there are magistrates, this is an aristocracy.[3] If more citizen-magistrates than simple private citizens, that is a democracy.

[1] Of course no such modification as that proposed by Comte (*Politique Positive*, iv. 421) would come within the scope of the doctrine of the Social Contract. For each of the seventeen Intendances into which he divides France, is to be ruled by a chief, 'always appointed and removed by the central power.' There is no room for the sovereignty of the people here, even in things parochial.

[2] There was one extraordinary instance during the Revolution of attempting to make popular government direct on Rousseau's principle, in the scheme (1790) of which Danton was a chief supporter, for reorganizing the municipal administration of Paris. The assemblies of sections were to sit permanently; their vote was to be taken on current questions; and action was to follow the aggregate of their decrees. See Von Sybel's *Hist. Fr. Rev.*, i. 275. M. Louis Blanc's *History*, Bk. III., ch. ii.

[3] This was also Bodin's definition of an aristocratic state; 'si minor pars civium cæteris imperat.'

The last government is as a general rule best fitted for small states, and the first for large ones—on the principle that the number of the supreme magistrates ought to be in the inverse ratio of that of the citizens. But there is a multitude of circumstances which may furnish reasons for exceptions to this general rule.

This common definition of the three forms of governments according to the mere number of the participants in the chief magistracy, though adopted by Hobbes and other writers, is certainly inadequate and uninstructive, without some further qualification, such as Aristotle, for instance, furnishes, when he refers to the interests in which the government is carried on, whether the interest of a small body or of the whole of the citizens.[1] Montesquieu's well-known division, though logically faulty, still has the merit of pointing to conditions of difference among forms of government, outside of and apart from the one fact of the number of the sovereign. To divide governments, as Montesquieu did, into republics, monarchies, and despotisms, was to use two principles of division, first the number of the sovereign, and next something else, namely, the difference between a constitutional and an absolute monarch. Then he returned to the first principle of division, and separated a republic into a government of all, which is a democracy, and a government by a part, which is aristocracy.[2] Still, to have introduced the element of law-abidingness in the

[1] *Politics*, III. vi.—vii.
[2] *Esprit des Lois*, II. i. ii.

chief magistracy, whether of one or more, was to have called attention to the fact that no single distinction is enough to furnish us with a conception of the real and vital differences which may exist between one form of government and another.[1]

The important fact about a government lies quite as much in the qualifying epithet which is to be affixed to any one of the three names, as in the name itself. We know nothing about a monarchy, until we have been told whether it is absolute or constitutional; if absolute, whether it is administered in the interests of the realm, like that of Prussia under Frederick the Great, or in the interests of the ruler, like that of an Indian principality under a native prince; if constitutional, whether the real power is aristocratic, as in Great Britain a hundred years ago, or plutocratic, as in Great Britain to-day, or popular, as it may be here a hundred years hence. And so with reference to each of the other two forms; neither name gives us any instruction, except of a merely negative kind, until it has been made precise by one or more explanatory epithets. What is the common quality of the old Roman republic, the republics of the Swiss confederation, the republic of Venice, the American republic, the republic of Mexico? Plainly the word republic has no

[1] Rousseau gave the name of *tyrant* to a usurper of royal authority in a kingdom, and *despot* to a usurper of the sovereign authority (*i.e.*, τύραννος in the Greek sense). The former might govern according to the laws, but the latter placed himself above the laws. (*Cont. Soc.*, III. x.) This corresponded to Locke's distinction: 'As usurpation is the exercise of power which another hath a right to, so tyranny is the exercise of a power beyond right, which nobody can have a right to.' *Civil Gov.*, Ch. xviii.

further effect beyond that of excluding the idea of a ruling dynasty.

Rousseau is perhaps less open to this kind of criticism than other writers on political theory, for the reason that he distinguishes the constitution of the state from the constitution of the government. The first he settles definitely. The whole body of the people is to be sovereign, and to be endowed alone with what he conceived as the only genuinely legislative power. The only question which he considers open, is as to the form in which the *delegated executive authority* shall be organized. Democracy, the immediate government of all by all, he rejects as too perfect for men; it requires a state so small that each citizen knows all the others, manners so simple that the business may be small and the mode of discussion easy, equality of rank and fortune so general as not to allow of the overriding of political equality by material superiority, and so forth.[1] Monarchy labours under a number of disadvantages which are tolerably obvious. 'One essential and inevitable defect, which must always place monarchic below republican government, is that in the latter the public voice hardly ever promotes to the first places any but capable and enlightened men who fill them with honour; whereas those who get on in monarchies, are for the most part small busybodies, small knaves, small intriguers, in whom the puny talents which are the secret of reaching substantial posts in courts, only serve to show

[1] III. iv.

their stupidity to the public as soon as they have made their way to the front. The people is far less likely to make a blunder in a choice of this sort, than the prince, and a man of true merit is nearly as rare in the ministry, as a fool at the head of the government of a republic.'[1] There remains aristocracy. Of this there are three sorts, natural, elective, and hereditary. The first can only thrive among primitive folk, while the third is the worst of all governments. The second is the best, for it is aristocracy properly so called. If men only acquire rule in virtue of election, then purity, enlightenment, experience, and all the other grounds of public esteem and preference, become so many new guarantees that the administration shall be wise and just. It is the best and most natural order that the wisest should govern the multitude, provided you are sure they will govern the multitude for its advantage, and not for their own. If aristocracy of this kind requires one or two virtues less than a popular executive, it also demands others which are peculiar to itself, such as moderation in the rich, and content in the poor. For this form comports with a certain inequality of fortune, for the reason that it is well that the administration of public affairs should be confided to those who are best able to give their whole time to it. At the same time it is of importance that an opposite choice should occasionally teach the people that in the merit of men there are more momentous reasons of preference than wealth.[2]

[1] III. vi. [2] III. v.

Rousseau, as we have seen, had pronounced English liberty to be no liberty at all, save during the few days once in seven years when the elections to parliament take place. Yet this scheme of an elective aristocracy was in truth a very near approach to the English form as it is theoretically presented in our own day, with a suffrage gradually becoming universal. If the suffrage were universal, and if its exercise took place once a year, our system, in spite of the now obsolescent elements of hereditary aristocracy and nominal monarchy, would be as close a realisation of the scheme of the Social Contract as any representative system permits. If Rousseau had further developed his notions of confederation, the United States would most have resembled his type.

6. What is to be the attitude of the state in respect of religion? Certainly not that prescribed by the policy of the middle ages. The separation of the spiritual from the temporal power, indicated by Jesus Christ, and developed by his followers in the course of many subsequent generations, was in Rousseau's eyes most mischievous, because it ended in the subordination of the temporal power to the spiritual, which is incompatible with an efficient polity. Even the kings of England, though they style themselves heads of the church, are really its ministers and servants.[1]

The last allegation evinces Rousseau's usual ignorance of history, and need not be discussed, any more than his proposition on which he lays so much stress,

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, IV. viii.

that christians cannot possibly be good soldiers, nor truly good citizens, because their hearts being fixed upon another world, they must necessarily be indifferent to the success or failure of such enterprises as they may take up in this.[1] In reading the Social Contract, and some other of the author's writings besides, we have constantly to interpret the direct, positive, categorical form of predication into something of this kind—'such and such consequences ought logically to follow from the meaning of the name, or the definition of a principle, or from such and such motives.' The change of this moderate form of provisional assertion into the unconditional statement that such and such consequences have actually followed, constantly lands the author in propositions which any reader who tests them by an appeal to the experience of mankind, written and unwritten, at once discovers to be false. Rousseau himself took less trouble to verify his conclusions by such an appeal to experience, than any writer that ever lived in a scientific age. The other remark to be made on the above section is that the rejection of the christian or ecclesiastical division of the powers of the church and the powers of the state, is the strongest illustration that could be found of the debt of Rousseau's conception of a state to the old pagan conception. It was the main characteristic of the polities which christian monotheism and feudalism together succeeded in replacing, to recognise no such division as that between church and state, pope and

[1] Ib., pp. 197—201.

emperor. Rousseau resumed the old conception. But he adjusted it in a certain degree to the spirit of his own time, and imposed certain philosophical limitations upon it. His scheme is as follows.

Religion, he says, in its relation to the state, may be considered as of three kinds. First, natural religion, without temple, altar, or rite, the true and pure theism of the natural conscience of man. Second, local, civil, or positive religion, with dogmas, rites, exercises; a theology of a primitive people, exactly co-extensive with all the rights and all the duties of men. Third, a religion like the christianity of the Romish church, which gives men two sets of laws, two chiefs, two countries, submits them to contradictory duties, and prevents them from being able to be at once devout and patriotic. The last of these is so evidently pestilent, as to need no discussion. The second has the merit of teaching men to identify duty to their gods with duty to their country; under this, to die for the land is martyrdom, to break its laws impiety, and to subject a culprit to public execration is to devote him to the anger of the gods. But it is bad, because it is at bottom a superstition, and because it makes a people sanguinary and intolerant. The first of all, which is now styled a christian theism, having no special relation with the body politic, adds no force to the laws. There are many particular objections to christianity flowing from the fact of its not being a kingdom of this world, and this above all, that christianity only preaches servitude and

dependence.[1] What then is to be done? The sovereign must establish a purely civil profession of faith. It will consist of the following positive dogmas:—the existence of a divinity, powerful, intelligent, beneficent, and foreseeing; the life to come; the happiness of the just, the chastisement of the wicked; the sanctity of the social contract and the laws. These articles of belief are imposed not as dogmas of religion exactly, but as sentiments of sociability. If any one declines to accept them, he ought to be exiled, not for being impious, but for being unsociable, incapable of sincere attachment to the laws, or of sacrificing his life to his duty. If any one, after publicly recognising these dogmas, carries himself as if he did not believe them, let him be punished by death, for he has committed the worst of crimes, he has lied before the laws.[2]

Rousseau thus, unconsciously enough, brought to its climax that reaction against the absorption of the state in the church which had first taken a place in literature in the controversy between legists and canonists, and had found its most famous illustration in the De Monarchiâ of the divine poet of catholicism. The division of two co-equal realms, one temporal, the other spiritual, was replaced in the Genevese thinker by what he admitted

[1] This is not unlike what De Tocqueville says somewhere, that christianity bids you render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, but seems to discourage any inquiry whether Cæsar is an usurper or a lawful ruler.

[2] *Cont. Soc.*, IV. viii. 203. As we have already seen, he had entreated Voltaire, of all men in the world, to draw up a civil profession of faith. See vol. i. 326.

to be 'pure Hobbism.' This, the rigorous subordination of the church to the state, was the end, so far as France went, of the speculative controversy which had occupied Europe for so many ages, as to the respective powers of pope and emperor, of positive law and law divine; and the famous civil constitution of the clergy (1790), which was the expression of Rousseau's principle as formulated by his disciples in the Constituent Assembly, was the revolutionary conclusion to the world-wide dispute, whose most melodramatic episode had been the scene in the courtyard of Canossa.

The memorable prescription, banishing all who should not believe in a god, or a future state, or in rewards and punishments for the deeds done in the body, and putting to death any who, after subscribing to the required profession, should seem no longer to hold it, has naturally created a very lively horror in a tolerant generation, some of whose finest spirits have rejected deliberately and finally the articles of belief, without which they could not have been suffered to exist in Rousseau's state. It seemed to contemporaries, who were enthusiastic above all things for humanity and infinite tolerance, these being the prizes of the long conflict which they hoped they were completing, to be a return to the horrors of the holy office. Men were as shocked as the modern philosopher is, when he finds the greatest of the followers of Socrates imposing in his latest piece the penalty of imprisonment for five years, to be followed in case of obduracy by death, on one who should not believe in the gods set up for the

state by the lawmaker.[1] And we can hardly comfort ourselves, as Milton did about Plato, who framed laws which no city ever yet received, and 'fed his fancy with making many edicts to his airy burgomasters, which they who otherwise admire him, wish had been rather buried and excused in the genial cups of an academic night-sitting.'[2] Rousseau's ideas fell among men who were most potent and corporeal burgomasters. In the winter of 1793 two parties in Paris stood face to face; the rationalistic, Voltairean party of the commune, named improperly after Hébert, but whose best member was Chaumette, and the sentimental, Rousseauite party, headed by Robespierre. The first had industriously desecrated the churches, and consummated their revolt against the gods of the old time by the public worship of the goddess of reason, who was prematurely set up for deity of the new. Robespierre retaliated with the mummeries of the festival of the supreme being, and protested against atheism as the crime of aristocrats. Presently the atheistic party succumbed. Chaumette was not directly implicated in the proceedings which led to their fall, but he was by and by accused of conspiring with Hébert, Clootz, and the rest, 'to destroy all notion of divinity and base the government of France on atheism.' 'They attack the immortality of the soul,' cried Saint Just, 'the thought which consoled Socrates in his dying moments, and their dream is to

[1] Plato's *Laws*, Bk. x. 909, etc.
[2] *Areopagitica*, p. 417. (Edit. 1867.)

raise atheism into a worship.' And this was the offence, technically and officially described, for which Chaumette and Clootz were sent to the guillotine (April, 1794), strictly on the principle which had been laid down in the Social Contract, and accepted by Robespierre.[1]

It would have been odd in any writer less possessed with the infallibility of his own dreams than Rousseau was, that he should not have seen the impossibility in anything like the existing conditions of human nature, of limiting the profession of civil faith to the three or four articles which happened to constitute his own belief. Having once granted the general position that a citizen may be required to profess some religious faith, there is no speculative principle, and there is no force in the world, which can fix any bound to the amount or kind of religious faith which the state has the right thus to exact. Rousseau said that a man was dangerous to the city who did not believe in god, a future state, and divine reward and retribution; but Calvin thought a man dangerous who did not believe both that there is only one god, and also that there are three gods. And so Chaumette went to the scaffold, and Servetus to the stake, on the one common principle that the civil magistrate is concerned with heresy. And Hébert was only following out the same doctrine in a mild and equitable manner, when he insisted on preventing the publication of a book in which the

[1] See a speech of his, which is Rousseau's 'civil faith' done into rhetoric, given in M. Louis Blanc's *Hist. de la Rév. Française*, Bk. x. c. xiv.

author professed his belief in a god. A single step in the path of civil interference with opinion leads you the whole way.

The history of the protestant churches is enough to show the pitiable futility of the proviso for religious tolerance with which Rousseau closed his exposition. 'If there is no longer an exclusive national religion, then every creed ought to be tolerated which tolerates other creeds, so long as it contains nothing contrary to the duties of the citizen. But whoever dares to say, *Out of the church, no salvation*, ought to be banished from the state.' The reason for which Henry IV. embraced the Roman religion—namely, that in that he might be saved, in the opinion alike of protestants and catholics, whereas in the reformed faith, though he was saved according to protestants, yet according to catholics he was necessarily damned,—ought to have made every honest man, and especially every prince, regret it. It was the more curious that Rousseau did not see the futility of drawing the line of tolerance at any given set of dogmas, however simple and slight and acceptable to himself they might be, because he invited special admiration for D'Argenson's excellent maxim that 'in the republic everybody is perfectly free in what does not hurt others,'[1]—a maxim which has very little significance and no value, unless we interpret it as giving entire liberty of opinion, because no opinion whatever can hurt others,

[1] *Considérations sur le gouvernement ancien et présent de la France* (1764). Quoted by Rousseau from a manuscript copy.

until it manifests itself in act, including of course speech, which is a kind of act. Rousseau admitted that over and above the profession of civil faith, a citizen might hold what opinions he pleased, in entire freedom from the sovereign's cognisance or jurisdiction, 'for as the sovereign has no competence in the other world, the fate of subjects in that is not his affair, provided they are good citizens in this.' But good citizenship consists in doing or forbearing from certain actions, and to punish on the inference that forbidden action is likely to follow from the rejection of a set of opinions, or to exact a test oath of adherence to such opinions on the same principle, is to concede the whole theory of civil intolerance, however little Rousseau may have realised the perfectly legitimate applications of his doctrine. It was an unconscious compromise. He was thinking of Calvin in practice and Hobbes in theory, and he was at the same time influenced by the moderate spirit of his time, and the comparatively reasonable character of his personal belief. He praised Hobbes as the only author who had seen the right remedy for the conflict of the spiritual and temporal jurisdictions, by proposing to unite the two heads of the eagle, and reducing all to political unity, without which never will either state or government be duly constituted. But Hobbes was consistent without flinching. He refused to set limits to the religious prescriptions which a sovereign might impose, for 'even when the civil sovereign is an infidel, every one of his own subjects that resisteth him,

sinneth against the laws of God (for such are the laws of nature), and rejecteth the counsel of the apostles, that admonisheth all christians to obey their princes. . . And for their faith, it is internal and invisible: they have the licence that Naaman had, and need not put themselves into danger for it; but if they do, they ought to expect their reward in heaven, and not complain of their lawful sovereign.'[1] All this flowed from the very idea and definition of sovereignty, which Rousseau accepted from Hobbes, as we have already seen. Such consequences, however, stated in these bold terms, must have been highly revolting to Rousseau, who could not assent to an exercise of sovereignty which might be atheistic, mahometan, or anything else unqualifiedly monstrous. He failed to see the folly of trying to unite the old notions of a christian commonwealth with what was fundamentally his own notion of a commonwealth after the ancient type. He stripped the pagan republics which he took for his model, of their national and official polytheism, and he put on in its stead a scanty remnant of theism slightly tinged with christianity. Then he practically accepted Hobbes's audacious bidding to the man who should not be able to accept the state creed, to go courageously to martyrdom, and leave the land in peace. For the modern principle, which was contained in D'Argenson's saying previously quoted, that the civil power does best absolutely and unreservedly to ignore spirituals, he was not prepared either by his

[1] *Leviathan*, ch. xliii. 601. Also ch. xlii.

emancipation from the theological ideas of his youth, or by his observation of the working and tendencies of systems, which involved the state in some more or less close relations with the church, either as superior, equal, or subordinate. Every test is sure to insist on mental independence ending exactly where the speculative curiosity of the time is most intent to begin.

Let us now shortly confront Rousseau's ideas with some of the propositions belonging to another method of approaching the philosophy of government, that have for their key-note the conception of expediency or convenience, and are tested by their conformity to the observed and recorded experience of mankind. According to this method, the ground and origin of society is not a compact, which never existed in any known case, and never was a condition of obligation either in primitive or developed societies, either between subjects and sovereign, or between the equal members of a sovereign body, but an acceptance of conditions which first came into existence by reason of the sociability inherent in man, and were developed by man's spontaneous search after convenience. The statement that while the constitution of man is the work of nature, that of the state is the work of art,[1] is as misleading as the opposite statement that governments are not made, but grow,[2] and the truth lies

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, III. xi. Borrowed from Hobbes, who said: 'Magnus ille Leviathan quæ civitas appellatur, opificium artis est.'

[2] Mackintosh's.

between them, in such propositions as that institutions owe their existence and development to deliberate human effort, working in accordance with circumstances naturally fixed both in human character and in the external field of its activity. The obedience of the subject to the sovereign has its root not in contract but in force, the force of the sovereign to punish disobedience. A man does not consent to be put to death if he shall commit a murder, for the reason alleged by Rousseau, namely, as a means of protecting his own life against murder.[1] There is no consent in the transaction. Some person or persons, possessed of sovereign authority, promulgated a command that the subject should not commit murder, and appointed penalties for such commission, and it was not a fictitious assent to these penalties, but the fact that the sovereign was strong enough to enforce them, which made the command valid.

Supposing a law to be passed in an assembly of the sovereign people by a majority; what binds a member of the minority to obedience? Rousseau's answer is this:—When the law is proposed, the question put is not whether they approve or reject the proposition, but whether it is conformable to the general will: the general will appears from the votes: if the opinion contrary to my own wins the day, that only proves that I was mistaken, and that what I took for the general will was not really so.[2] We can scarcely imagine more nonsensical sophistry than this. The

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, II. v. [2] IV. ii.

proper answer evidently is, that either experience or calculation has taught the citizens in a popular government that in the long run it is most expedient for the majority of votes to decide the law; in other words, that the inconvenience to the minority of submitting to a law which they dislike, is less than the inconvenience of fighting to have their own way, or retiring to form another and separate community. The minority submit to obey laws which were made against their will, because they cannot avoid the necessity of undergoing more inconveniences than are involved in this submission. The same explanation partially covers what is unfortunately the more frequent case in the history of the race, the submission of the majority to the laws imposed by a minority of one or more. In both these cases, however, as in the general question of the source of our obedience to the laws, deliberate and conscious sense of convenience is as slight in its effect upon conduct here, as it is in the rest of the field of our moral motives; it is covered so thickly over and constantly neutralised by the multitudinous growths of use, by the many forms of fatalistic or ascetic religious sentiment, by physical apathy of race, and all other conditions that interpose to narrow or abrogate the authority of pure reason over human conduct. Rousseau, expounding his conception of a normal political state, was no doubt warranted in leaving these complicating conditions out of account, though to do so is to rob any treatise on government of much of its possible value. The same

excuse cannot warrant him in basing his political institutions upon a figment, instead of upon the substantial ground of propositions about human nature, which the average of experience in given races and given stages of advancement has shown to be true within those limits. There are places in his writings where he reluctantly admits that men are only moved by their interests, and he does not even take care to qualify this sufficiently.[1] But throughout the Social Contract we seem to be contemplating the erection of a machine which is to work without reference to the only forces that can possibly impart movement to it.

The consequence of this is that Rousseau gives us not the least help towards the solution of any of the problems of actual government, because these are naturally both suggested and guided by considerations of expediency and improvement. It is as if he had never really settled the ends for which government exists, beyond the construction of the symmetrical machine of government itself. He is a geometer, not a mechanician, or shall we say he is a mechanician, and not a biologist concerned with the conditions of a living organism. The analogy of the body politic to the body natural was as present to him as it had been to all other writers on society, but he failed to seize the only useful lessons which such an analogy might have taught him—diversity of structure, differencing of function, development of strength by exercise, growth by nutrition—all of which might have been

[1] For instance, *Gouvernement de Pologne*, ch. xi. p. 305. And *Corr.*, v. 180.

serviceably translated into the dialect of political science, and have bestowed on his conception of political society more of the features of reality. We see no room for the free play of divergent forces, the active rivalry of hostile interests, the regulated conflict of multifarious personal aims, which can never be extinguished, except in moments of veritable crisis, by the most sincere attachment to the common causes of the land. Thus the modern question which is of such vital interest for all the foremost human societies, of the union of collective energy with the encouragement of individual freedom, is, if not wholly untouched, at least wholly unillumined by anything that Rousseau says. To tell us that a man on entering a society exchanges his natural liberty for civil liberty which is limited by the general will,[1] is to give us a phrase, where we seek a solution. To say that if it is the opposition of private interests which made the establishment of societies necessary, it is the accord of those interests which makes them possible,[2] is to utter a truth which feeds no practical curiosity. The opposition of private interests remains, in spite of the yoke which their accord has imposed upon it, but which only controls and does not suppress such an opposition. What sort of control? What degree? What bounds?

So again let us consider the statement that the instant the government usurps the sovereignty, then the social pact is broken, and all the citizens, restored by right to their natural liberty, are forced but not

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, I. viii. [2] *Cont. Soc.*, II. i.

morally obliged to obey.[1] He began by telling his readers that man, though born free, is now everywhere in chains; and therefore it would appear that in all existing cases the social pact has been broken, and the citizens living under the reign of force, are free to resume their natural liberty, if they are only strong enough to do so. This declaration of the general duty of rebellion no doubt had its share in generating that fervid eagerness that all other peoples should rise and throw off the yoke, which was one of the most astonishing, benevolent, and fatuous anxieties of the French during their revolution. That was not the worst quality of such a doctrine. It made government impossible, by basing the right or duty of resistance on a question that could not be reached by positive evidence, but must always be decided by an arbitrary interpretation of an arbitrarily imagined document. The moderate proposition that if a government is a bad one, and if the people are strong enough to overthrow it, and if their leaders have reason to suppose they can provide a less bad one in its place, supplies tests that are capable of application. Our own writers in favour of the doctrine of resistance partly based their arguments upon the historic instances of the old testament, and it is one of the most striking contributions of protestantism to the cause of freedom, that it sent

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, III. x. 'Let every individual who may usurp the sovereignty be instantly put to death by free men.'—Robespierre's *Déclaration des droits de l'homme*, § 27. 'When the government violates the rights of the people, insurrection becomes for the people the most sacred of rights and the most indispensable of duties.' § 35.

people in an admiring spirit to the history of the most rebellious nation that ever existed, and so provided them in Hebrew insurgency with a corrective for the too submissive political teaching of the gospel. But these writers have throughout a tacit appeal to expediency, as writers might always be expected to have, who were really meditating on the possibility of their principles being brought to the test of practice. There can be no evidence possible with a test so vague as the fact of the rupture of a compact, whose terms are authentically known to nobody concerned. Speak of bad laws and good, wise administration or unwise, just government or unjust, extravagant or economical, civically elevating or demoralising; all these are questions which men may apply themselves to settle with knowledge, and with a more or less definite degree of assurance. But who can tell how he is to find out whether sovereignty has been usurped, and the social compact broken? Was there a usurpation of sovereignty in France not many years ago, when the assumption of power by the prince was ratified by many millions of votes?

The same case, we are told, namely, breach of the social compact and restoration of natural liberty, occurs when the members of the government usurp separately the power which they ought only to exercise in a body.[1] Now this description applies very fairly to the famous episode in our constitutional history, connected with George the Third's first attack

[1] *Cont. Soc.*, III. x.

of madness in 1788. Parliament cannot lawfully begin business without a declaration of the cause of summons from the crown. On this occasion parliament both met and deliberated without communication from the crown. What was still more important was a vote of the parliament itself, authorising the passing of letters patent under the great seal for opening parliament by commission, and for giving assent to a Regency bill. This was a distinct usurpation of regal authority. Two members of the government (in Rousseau's sense of the term), namely the houses of parliament, usurped the power which they ought only to have exercised along with the crown.[1] The Whigs denounced the proceeding as a fiction, a forgery, a phantom, but if they had been readers of the Social Contract, and if they had been bitten by its dogmatic temper, they would have declared the compact of union violated, and all British citizens free to resume their natural rights. Not even the bitter virulence of faction at that time could tempt any politician to take up such a line, though within half a dozen years each of the democratic factions in France had worked at the overthrow of every other in turn, on the very principle which Rousseau had formulated and Robespierre had made familiar, that usurped authority is a valid reason for annihilating a government, no matter under what circumstances, nor how small the chance of replacing it by a better, nor how enormous the peril

[1] See May's *Constitutional Hist. of England*, ch. iii.; and lord Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, vol. II. ch. xii.

to the national well-being in the process. The true opposite to so anarchic a doctrine is assuredly not that of passive obedience either to chamber or monarch, but the right and duty of throwing off any government which inflicts more disadvantages than it confers advantages. Rousseau's whole theory tends inevitably to substitute a long series of struggles after phrases and shadows in the new era, for the equally futile and equally bloody wars of dynastic succession which have been the great curse of the old, and men die for a phrase as they used to die for a family. The other theory, which all English politicians accept in their hearts, and all commanding French politicians seem in their hearts to reject, was first expounded in direct view of Rousseau's teaching by Paley;[1] but of course the greatest, widest, and loftiest exposition of the bearings of expediency on government and its conditions, is to be found in the magnificent and immortal pieces of Burke, some of them suggested by absolutist violations of the doctrine in our own affairs, and some of them by anarchic violation of it in the affairs of France, after the seed sown by Rousseau had brought forth fruit.

We should, however, be false to our critical principle, if we did not recognise the historical effect of a speculation scientifically valueless. There has been no attempt to palliate either the shallowness or the

[1] In the 6th book of the *Moral Philosophy* (1785), ch. iii., and elsewhere. In the preface he refers to the effect which Rousseau's political theory was supposed to have had in the civil convulsions of Geneva, as one of the reasons which encouraged him to publish his own book.

practical mischievousness of the Social Contract. But there is another side to its influence. It was the match which kindled revolutionary fire in generous breasts throughout Europe. Not in France merely, but in Germany as well, its phrases became the language of all who aspired after freedom. Schiller spoke of Rousseau as one who 'converted christians into human beings,' and the *Robbers* (1778) is as if it had been directly inspired by the doctrine that usurped sovereignty restores men to their natural rights.[1] Smaller men in that violent movement which seized all the youth of Germany at that time, followed the same lead, if they happened to have any feeling about the political condition of their enslaved countries. There was alike in France and Germany a craving for a return to nature among the whole of the young generation. The Social Contract supplied a dialect for this longing on one side, just as the Emilius did on another. Such parts in it as people did not understand or did not like, they left out. They did not perceive its direction towards that 'perfect Hobbism,' which the author declared to be the only practical alternative to a democracy so austere as to be intolerable. They grasped phrases about the sovereignty of the people, the freedom for which nature had destined man, the slavery to which tyrants and oppressors had brought him. Above all they

[1] The author of the *Robbers* was one of the first men, along with Washington, Franklin, and Tom Paine, who was honoured with the diploma of citizenship by the French revolutionists, in September, 1792. It was signed by Danton and Roland.

were struck by the patriotism which shines so brightly in every page, like the fire on the altar of one of those ancient cities which had inspired the writer's ideal. In France, as we have already said, the patriotic flame seemed extinct. The ruinous disorder of the whole social system made the old love of country resemble love for a phantom, and so much of patriotic speech as survived was profoundly hollow. A man like Turgot even was not so much a patriot as a passionate lover of improvement, and with the whole school of which this great spirit was the noblest and strongest, a generous citizenship of the world had replaced the narrower sentiment which had inflamed antique heroism. Rousseau's exaltation of the Greek and Roman types in all their concentration and intensity, touches mortals of commoner mould. His theory made the native land what it had been to the citizens of earlier date, a true centre of existence, round which all the interests of the community, all its pursuits, all its hopes, grouped themselves with entire singleness of convergence, just as religious faith is the centre of existence to a church that sincerely accepts it. It was the virile and patriotic energy thus evoked, which presently saved France from partition, and European civilisation from the crushing supremacy of powers even more dark and retrograde than the first French empire.

We complete the estimate of the positive worth and tendencies of the Social Contract by adding to this, which was for the time the cardinal service, of rekindling the fire of patriotism, the rapid deduction

from the doctrine of the sovereignty of peoples of the great truth, that a nation with a civilised polity does not consist of an order or a caste, but of the great body of its members, the army of toilers who make the most painful of the sacrifices that are needed for the continuous nutrition of the social organization. As Condorcet put it, and he drew inspiration partly from the intellectual school of Voltaire, and partly from the social school of Rousseau, all institutions ought to have for their aim the physical, intellectual, and moral amelioration of the poorest and most numerous class.[1] This is the people. Second, there gradually followed from the important place given by Rousseau to the idea of equal association, as at once the foundation and the enduring bond of a community, those schemes of Mutualism, and all the other shapes of collective action for a common social good, which have possessed such commanding attraction for the imagination of large classes of good men in France ever since. Hitherto these forms have been sterile and deceptive, and they must remain so, until the idea of special function has been raised to a level with that of united forces working together to a single end.

In these ways the author of the Social Contract did involuntarily and unconsciously contribute to the growth of those new and progressive ideas, in which

[1] Rousseau's influence on Condorcet is seen in the latter's maxim, which has found such favour in the eyes of socialist writers, that 'not only equality of right, but equality of fact, is the goal of the social art.'

for his own part he lacked all faith. Præ-Newtonians knew not the wonders of which Newton was to find the key, and we, weary of waiting for the master intelligence who may effect the final combination of moral and scientific ideas needed for a new social era, may be inclined to lend a half-complacent ear to the arid sophisters who assume that the last word of civilisation has been heard in existing arrangements. But we may perhaps take courage from history to hope that generations will come, to whom our system of distributing among a few the privileges and delights that are procured by the toil of the many, will seem just as wasteful, as morally hideous, and as scientifically indefensible, as that older system which impoverished and depopulated empires, that a despot or a caste might have no least wish ungratified, for which the lives or the treasure of others could suffice.

CHAPTER XIII.

EMILIUS.

ONE whose most intense conviction was faith in the goodness of all things and creatures as they are first produced by nature, and so long as they remain unsophisticated by the hand and purpose of man, was in some degree bound to show a way by which this evil process of sophistication might be brought to the lowest possible point, and the best of all natural creatures kept as near as possible to his high original. Rousseau, it is true, held in a sense of his own the doctrine of the fall of man, but that doctrine has never made people any more remiss in the search after a virtue, which if hopeless in strict logic, is still indispensable in actual life. And Rousseau's way of believing that man had fallen, was so coloured at once by that expansion of sanguine emotion which marked his century, though he did his best to resist it, and by that necessity for repose in idyllic perfection of simplicity, which marked his own temperament, that enthusiasm for an imaginary human creature effectually shut out the dogma of his fatal depravation. 'How difficult a thing it is,'

madame d'Epinay once said to him, 'to bring up a child.' 'Assuredly it is,' answered Rousseau; 'because the father and mother are not made by nature to bring it up, nor the children to be brought up.'[1] This cynical speech can only have been an accidental outbreak of spleen, for it was a contradiction to his one constant opinion that nature is all good and bounteous, and that the inborn capacity of man in a normal condition for reaching true happiness knows no stint.

In writing Emilius, he sat down to consider what man is, and what can be made of him. Here, as in all the rest of his work, he only obeyed the tendencies of his time in choosing a theme. An age touched by the spirit of hope inevitably turns to the young; for with the young lies fulfilment. Such epochs are ever pressing with the question, how is the future to be shaped? Our answer depends on the theory of human disposition, and in these epochs the theory is always optimistic. Rousseau was saved, as so many thousands of men have been alike in conduct and speculation, by inconsistency, and not shrinking from two mutually contradictory trains of thought. Society is corrupt, and society is the work of man. Yet man who has engendered this corrupted birth, is good and whole. The strain in the argument may be pardoned for the hopefulness of the conclusion; it brought Rousseau into harmony with the eager effort of the time to pour young character into finer mould, and

[1] *Mém. de mdme. d'Epinay*, ii. 276—8.

made him the most powerful agent in giving to such efforts both fervour and elevation. While others were content with the mere enunciation of maxims and precepts, he breathed into them the spirit of life, and enforced them with a vividness of faith that clothed education with the augustness and unction of religion. The training of the young soul to virtue was surrounded with something of the awful holiness of a sacrament; and those who laboured in this sanctified field, were exhorted to a constancy of devotion, and were promised a fulness of recompense, that raised them from the rank of drudges to place of highest honour among the ministers of nature.

Everybody at this time was thinking about education, partly on account of the suppression of the Jesuits, the chief instructors of the time, and a great many people were writing about it. Madame d'Epinay wrote considerations upon the bringing up of the young.[1] Madame de Grafigny did the same in a less grave shape.[2] She received letters from the precociously sage Turgot, abounding in the same natural and sensible precepts which ten years later were commended with more glowing eloquence in the pages of Emilius.[3] Grimm had an elaborate scheme for a treatise on education.[4] Helvétius followed his exploration of the composition of the human mind, by a treatise on the training proper for the intellectual and moral faculties.[5] Education by these and other

[1] *Lettres à mon Fils* (1758), and *Les Conversations d'Emilie* (1783).
[2] *Lettres Péruviennes.*
[3] *Œuv.*, ii. 785—94.
[4] *Corr. Lit.*, iii. 65.
[5] See note to p. 206.

writers was being conceived in a wider sense than had been known to ages controlled by churchmen and collegians. It slowly came to be thought of in connection with the family. The improvement of ideas upon education was only one phase of the great general movement towards the restoration of the family, which was so striking a spectacle in France after the middle of the century. Education now came to comprehend the whole system of the relations between parents and their children, from earliest infancy to maturity. The direction of such wider feeling about these relations tended strongly towards an increased closeness in them, more intimacy, and a more continuous suffusion of tenderness and long attachment. All this was part of the general revival of naturalism. People began to reflect that nature was not likely to have designed infants to be suckled by other women than their own mothers, nor that they should be banished from the society of those who are most concerned in their well-being, from the cheerful hearth and wise affectionate converse of home, to the frigid and unamiable discipline of colleges and convents, and the monition of strangers.

Then the rising rebellion against the church and its faith perhaps contributed something towards a movement which, if it would not break the religious monopoly of instruction, must at least introduce the parent as a competitor with the priestly instructor for influence over the ideas, habits and affections of his

children. The rebellion was aimed against the spirit as well as the manner of the established system. The church had not fundamentally modified the significance of the dogma of the fall and depravity of man; education was still conceived as a process of eradication and suppression of the mystical old Adam. The new current flowed in channels far away from this black folly of superstition. Men at length ventured once more to look at one another with free and generous gaze. The veil of the temple was rent, and the false mockeries of the shrine of the Hebrew divinity made plain to scornful eyes. People ceased to see one another as guilty victims cowering under a divine curse. They stood erect in consciousness of manhood. The palsied conception of man, with his large discourse of reason looking before and after, his lofty and majestic patience in search for new forms of beauty and new secrets of truth, his sense of the manifold sweetness and glory and awe of the universe, above all his infinite capacity of loyal pity and love for his comrades in the great struggle, and his high sorrow for his own wrong-doing,—the palsied and crushing conception of this excellent and helpful being as a poor worm, writhing under the vindictive and meaningless anger of an omnipotent tyrant in the large heavens, only to be appeased by sacerdotal intervention, was fading back into those regions of night, whence the depth of human misery and the obscuration of human intelligence had once permitted its escape, to hang evilly over the western world for a

season. So vital a change in the point of view quickly touched the theory and art of the upbringing of the young. Education began to figure less as the suppression of the natural man, than his strengthening and development; less as a process of rooting out tares, more as the grateful tending of shoots abounding in promise of richness. What had been the most drearily mechanical of duties, was transformed into a task that surpassed all others in interest and hope. If man be born not bad but good, under no curse, but rather the bestower and receiver of many blessings, then the entire atmosphere of young life, in spite of the toil and the peril, is made cheerful with the sunshine and warmth of the great folded possibilities of excellence, happiness, and well-doing.

I.

Locke in education, as in metaphysics and in politics, was the pioneer of the French thought of this expansive time. In education there is less room for scientific originality. The sage of a parish, provided only she began her trade with an open and energetic mind, may here pass philosophers. Locke was nearly as sage, as homely, as real, as one of these strenuous women. The honest plainness of certain of his prescriptions for the preservation of physical health perhaps keeps us somewhat too near the earth. His manner throughout is marked by the stout wisdom of the practical teacher, who is content to assume good sense in his hearers, and feels no necessity for kin-

dling a blaze or raising a tempest. He gives us a practical manual for producing a healthy, instructed, upright, well-mannered, young English squire, who shall be rightly fitted to take his own life sensibly in hand, and procure from it a fair amount of wholesome satisfaction both for himself and the people with whom he is concerned. It is one of the most admirable protests in the world against effeminacy and pedantry, and parents already moved by grave desire to do their duty prudently to their sons, will hardly find another book better suited to their ends. Besides Locke, we must also count Charron, and the amazing educator of Gargantua, and Montaigne before either, among the writers whom Rousseau had read, with that profit and increase which attends the dropping of the good ideas of other men into fertile minds. No man need be ashamed of failing to invent a whole set of new notions on such a subject as education, on which experience has naturally accumulated so much wise and unimprovable reflection. Rousseau at least invented new form, and that is well known to be often as great an exploit as the discovery of new matter.

There is an immense class of natures, and those not the lowest, which the connection of duty with mere prudence does not carry far enough. They only stir when something has moved their feeling for the ideal, and raised the mechanical offices of the narrow day into association with the spaciousness and height of spiritual things. To these Rousseau came. For both the tenour and the wording of the most striking pre-

cepts of the Emilius, he owes much to Locke. Reading the two books together, we at once feel that Locke has furnished the substance, and laid the foundations. But what was so realistic in him becomes blended in Rousseau with all the power and richness and beauty of an ideal, that can move the most generous parts of human character. The details of education have a largeness communicated to them, by being made to figure as the rudimentary processes of the noblest of natural constructions. The child is treated as the miniature of humanity; it thus touches the whole sphere of our sympathies, warms our curiosity as to the composition of man's nature, and becomes the very eye and centre of moral and social aspirations.

Accordingly Rousseau almost at once begins by elaborating his conception of the kind of human creature which it is worth while to take the trouble to rear, and the only kind which pure nature will help you in perfecting. Hence Emilius, besides being a manual for parents, contains the lines of a moral ideal of life and character for all others. The old thought of the Discourses revives in full vigour. The artifices of society, the perverting traditions of use, the feeble maxims of indolence, convention, helpless dependence on the aid or the approval of others, are routed at the first stroke. The old regimen of accumulated prejudice is replaced, in dealing alike with body and soul, by the new system of liberty and nature. In saying this we have already said that the exaltation of Spartan manners which runs through

Rousseau's other writings has vanished, and that every trace of the much-vaunted military and public training has yielded before the attractive thought of tender parents and a wisely ruled home. Public instruction, we learn, can now no longer exist, because there is no longer such a thing as country, and therefore there can no longer be citizens. Only domestic education can now help us to rear the man according to nature, him who knows best among us how to bear the mingled good and ill of our life. Our whole wisdom consists in slavish prejudice, all our usages are subjection and constraint. The civil man is born, lives, and dies, a bondsman, from the hour when he is fastened in swaddling clothes, to that other hour when he is stitched up in his shroud. Rousseau, we easily perceive, has lost his passion for the rigorously appointed discipline and minute control of the Lycurgean institutes.

The artificial society of the time, with its aspirations after a return to nature, was moved to the most energetic enthusiasm by Rousseau's famous exhortations to mothers to nourish their own little ones. Morelly, as we have seen, had already enjoined the adoption of this practice.[1] So too had Buffon. But Morelly's voice had no resonance, Buffon's reasons were purely physical, and children were still sent out to nurse, until Rousseau's more passionate moral entreaties awoke maternal conscience. 'Do these tender mothers,' he exclaimed, 'who, when they have got rid of their

[1] See above, vol. i. p. 160.

infants, surrender themselves gaily to all the diversions of the town, know what sort of usage the child in the village is receiving, fastened in his swaddling band? At the least interruption that comes, they hang him up by a nail like a bundle of rags, and there the poor creature remains thus crucified, while the nurse goes about her affairs. Every one found in this position had a face of purple; as the violent compression of the chest would not allow the blood to circulate, it all went to the head, and the victim was supposed to be very quiet, just because it had not strength enough to cry out.'[1] But in Rousseau, as in Beethoven, a harsh and rugged passage is nearly always followed by some piece of exquisite and touching melody; and the force of these indignant pictures was heightened and relieved by moving appeal to all the tender joys of maternal solicitude, and thoughts of all that this solicitude could do for the happiness of the home, the father, and the young. The attraction of domestic life is pronounced the best antidote to the ill living of the time. The bustle of children, which you now think so importunate, gradually becomes delightful; it brings father and mother nearer to one another; and the lively animation of a family added to domestic cares, makes the dearest occupation of the wife, and the sweetest of all his amusements to the husband. If women will only once more become mothers again, men will very soon become fathers and husbands.

[1] *Emile*, I. 27.

The physical effect of this was not all wholesome. Rousseau's eloquence excited women to an inordinate pitch of enthusiasm for the duty of suckling their infants, but his contemptuous denunciation of the gaieties of Paris could not extinguish the love of amusement. So young mothers tried as well as they could to satisfy both desires, and their babes were brought to them at all unseasonable hours, while full of food and wine, or heated with dancing or play, and there received the nurture which, but for Rousseau, they would have drawn in more salutary sort from a healthy foster-mother in the country. This, however, was only an incidental drawback to a movement which was in its main lines full of excellent significance. The importance of giving freedom to the young limbs, of accustoming the body to rudeness and vicissitude of climate, of surrounding youth with light and cheerfulness and air, and even a tiny detail such as the propriety of substituting for coral or ivory some soft substance against which the growing teeth might press a way through without irritation, all these matters are handled with a fervid reality of interest, that gives to the tedium of the nursery a genuine touch of the poetic. Swathings, bandages, leading-strings, are condemned with a warmth like that with which he had denounced comedy.[1] The city is held up to indignant reprobation as the gulf of infant life, just as it had been in his earlier pieces as the gulf of all the highest energies of the adult life. Every child

[1] See also his diatribe against whalebone and tight-lacing for girls, V. 27.

ought to be born and nursed in the country, and it would be all the better if it remained in the country to the last day of its existence. You must accustom it little by little to the sight of disagreeable objects, such as toads and snakes; also in the same gradual manner to the sound of alarming noises, beginning with snapping a cap in a pistol. If the infant cries from pain which you cannot remove, make no attempt to soothe it; your caresses will not lessen the anguish of its colic, while the child will remember what it has to do in order to be coaxed and to get its own way. The nurse may amuse it by songs and lively cries, but she is not to din useless words into its ears; the first articulations that come to it should be few, easy, distinct, frequently repeated, and only referring to objects which the child may have shown to it. 'Our unlucky facility in cheating ourselves with words that we do not understand, begins earlier than we suppose.' Let there be no haste in inducing the child to speak articulately. The evil of precipitation in this respect is not that children use and hear words without sense, but that they use and hear them in a different sense from our own, without our perceiving it. Mistakes of this sort, committed thus early, have an influence, even after they are cured, over the turn of the mind for the rest of the creature's life. Hence it is a good thing to keep a child's vocabulary as limited as possible, lest it should have more words than ideas, and should say more than it can possibly realise in thought.[1]

[1] *Emile*, I. 93, etc.

In moral as in intellectual habits, the most perilous interval in human life is that between birth and the age of twelve. This is the time when errors and vices germ, without our having any instrument with which to pluck out the roots. The great secret is to make the early education purely negative; a process of keeping the heart, naturally so good, clear of vice, and the intelligence, naturally so true, clear of error. Take for first, second, and third precept, to follow nature and leave her free to the performance of her own tasks. Until the age of reason, there can be no idea of moral beings or social relations. Therefore, says Rousseau, no moral discussion. Locke's maxim in favour of constantly reasoning with children was a mistake. Of all the faculties of man, reason, which is only a compound of the rest, is that which is latest in development, and yet it is this which we are to use to develope those which come earliest of all. Such a course is to begin at the end, and to turn the finished work into an instrument. 'If children understood reason, they would have no need of being brought up; but in speaking to them in these early years a language which they do not comprehend, we accustom them to cheat themselves with words, to criticise what is said to them, to think themselves as wise as their masters, to become disputatious and mutinous; and all that we fancy we obtain from them through reasonable motives, we never obtain really except through motives of greediness, or fear, or vanity, which we are obliged to join to our supposed

reason.'[1] If you forget that nature meant children to be children before growing into men, you only force a fruit that has neither ripeness nor savour, and must soon go bad; you will have youthful doctors and old infants. 'For my own part I would as lief require a child to be five feet high, as to have judgment at the age of ten.'

To all this, however, there is certainly another side which Rousseau was too impetuous to see. Perfected reason is truly the tardiest of human endowments, but it can never be perfected at all unless the process be begun, and, within limits, the sooner the beginning is made, the earlier will be the ripening. To know the grounds of right conduct is, we admit, a different thing from feeling a disposition to practise it. But nobody will deny the expediency of an intelligent acquaintance with the reasons why one sort of conduct is bad and its opposite good, even if such an acquaintance can never become a substitute for the spontaneous action of thoroughly formed habit. For one thing, cases are constantly arising in a man's life that demand the exercise of reason, to settle the special application of principles which may have been acquired without knowledge of their rational foundation. In such cases, which are the critical and testing points of character, all depends upon the possession of a more or less justly trained intelligence, and the habit of using it. Now, as we have

[1] II. 134, followed by an entertaining parody of the ordinary kind of moral argumentation between a master and a child.

said, it is one of the great merits of the Emilius that it calls such attention to the early age at which mental influences begin to operate. Why should the gradual formation of the master habit of using the mind be any exception?

Here, however, we are once more in contact with Rousseau's central idea, disparagement of the reasoning faculty. Habit resting on sympathetic emotion, this is the key to his system of life; and that it is so follows from the essential deficiency of that system, which was an absolute want of hope or belief in the course of human improvement. No one can place his faith in the possibility of improvement, unless he has faith also, either that it will be effected by supernatural interference, or else that it will follow from gradual advance in the strength of human intelligence, no less than from increased sociableness of purpose. The strong current opinion in Rousseau's time repudiated supernatural interference, and expected all things from a wider enlightenment. Hence followed the theory of education as mainly a process of intellectual modification, and the associated theory, of which Helvétius was the exponent, that character is wholly the result of immediate acquisition.[1] Rousseau, on the contrary, insisted on inborn temperament, which was always good by hypothesis, as the foundation of character; he made that its great force

[1] Broached in his book *De l'esprit* (1758), but more fully and directly developed in *L'homme* (1771). For Helvétius's way of dealing with Rousseau's position, see the 5th section of the latter work, which contains a list of Rousseau's formally inconsistent propositions in this matter.

and stay, and therefore consistently besought all instructors to disturb its free working as little as possible. This was in effect only another way of putting his constantly reappearing doctrine of the supremacy of emotion over reason, and of the mischievousness of intellectual argumentation.

Though his dislike of the least attempt to introduce children to habits of argument as to the reasons of conduct, was in excess and was fraught with mischief, on the whole most persons will be disposed to agree that the mischief was less than that likely to result from the excess of his opponents in a contrary direction.

Belief in the efficacy of preaching is the bane of educational systems, as indeed it is the bane of criticism, art, religious instruction, and so many other of the forms in which we seek to influence one another. Verbal lessons ought to be so deeply effective, if only the will and the throng of various motives which guide it, instantly followed impression of a truth upon the intelligence. And they are, moreover, so easily communicated, saving the parent a life-time of anxious painstaking in shaping his own character, after such a pattern as shall silently draw all within its influence to pursuit of good and honourable things. The most valuable of Rousseau's notions about education, though he by no means consistently adhered to them, was his urgent contempt for this fatuous substitution of spoken injunctions and prohibitions, for the deeper language of example, and

the more living instruction of visible circumstance. The vast improvements that have since taken place in the theory and the art of education all over Europe, and of which he has the honour of being the first and most widely influential promoter, may all be traced to the spread of this wise principle, and its adoption in various forms. The change in the upbringing of the young exactly corresponds to the change in the treatment of the insane, and we may look back to the old system of endless catechisms, apophthegms, moral fables, and the rest of the paraphernalia of moral didactics, with the same horror with which we regard the gags, strait-waistcoats, chains, and dark cells, of poor mad people before the intervention of Pinel.

It is clear now to everybody who has any opinion on this most important of all subjects, that spontaneousness is the first quality in connection with right doing, which you can develope in the young, and this spontaneousness of habit is best secured by associating it with the approval of those to whom the child looks. Sympathy, in a word, is the true foundation from which to build up the structure of good habit; the young should be led to practise the elementary parts of right conduct from the desire to please, because this is a securer basis than the conclusions of an embryo reason, applied to the most complex conditions of action, while the grounds on which action is justified or condemned, may be made plain in the fulness of time, when the understanding is better able to deal with the ideas and terms essential to the matter. You

have two aims to secure, each without sacrifice of the other—first, that the child shall grow up with firm and promptly acting habit; second, that it shall retain respect for reason and an open mind. The latter may be acquired in the less immature years, while if the former is not acquired in the earlier times, a man grows up with a drifting unsettledness of will, that makes his life either vicious by quibbling sophistries, or helpless for want of ready conclusions.

To this extent, though he put his thought into less definite shape than this, Rousseau was more right than the school whose doctrines he controverted. 'I know,' he said, 'that all these virtues by imitation are only apish virtues, and that no good action is morally good except when it is done as such, and not because others do it. But at an age when the heart is still without feeling, we must make children imitate the acts of which we desire to implant in them the habit, until they are able to perform them from clear perception and love of what is good.'[1] Perhaps, considering the mental conditions of the time, that part of the truth was more needed than the other part, namely, that we must also begin to implant the germs of this clear perception of what is good, as early as the soil is capable of holding them, and that is probably much earlier than people usually suppose.

The first idea which is to be given to a child, little as we might expect such a doctrine from the author of

[1] *Emile*, II. 171.

the second Discourse, is declared to be that of property. And he can only acquire this idea by having something of his own. But how are we to teach him the significance of a thing being one's own? It is a prime rule to attempt to teach nothing by a verbal lesson; all instruction ought to be left to experience.[1] Therefore you must contrive some piece of experience which shall bring this notion of property vividly into a child's mind; the following for instance. Emilius is taken to a piece of garden; his instructor digs and dresses the ground for him, and the boy takes possession by sowing some beans. 'We come every day to water them, and see them come out of the ground with transports of joy. I add to this joy by saying, This belongs to you; and then explaining this term, I let him feel that he has put into the ground his time, labour, trouble, his person in short; that there is in this bit of ground something of himself which he may maintain against every comer, as he might withdraw his own arm from the hand of another man who would fain retain it in spite of him.' One day Emilius comes to his beloved garden, watering-pot in hand, and finds to his anguish and despair that all the beans have been plucked up, that the ground has been turned over, and that the spot is hardly recognisable. The gardener comes up, and explains with much warmth that he had sown the seed of a precious Maltese melon in this place long before Emilius had come with his trumpery beans, that therefore it was his land; that

[1] II. 141.

nobody touches the garden of his neighbour, in order that his own may remain untouched, and that if Emilius wants a piece of garden, he must pay for it by surrendering to the owner half the produce.[1] Thus, says Rousseau, the boy sees how the notion of property naturally goes back to the right of the first occupant as derived from labour. We should have thought it less troublesome, as it is certainly more important, to teach a boy the facts of property positively and imperatively; and this rather elaborate ascent to origins seems an exaggerated form of that very vice of over-instructing the growing reason in abstractions, which Rousseau had condemned so short a time before.

Again, there is the very strong objection to conveying lessons by artificially contrived incidents, that children are nearly always extremely acute in suspecting and discovering such contrivances. Yet Rousseau recurs to them over and over again, evidently taking delight in their ingenuity. Besides the illustration of the origin and significance of property, there is the complex fancy in which a juggler is made to combine instruction as to the properties of the magnet with certain severe moral truths.[2] He interests Emilius in astronomy and geography by a wonderful stratagem, in which the poor youth loses his way in a wood, is overpowered by hunger and weariness, and then is led on by his cunning tutor to a series of inferences from the position of the sun and so forth,

[1] *Emile*, II. 156—60. [2] *Emile*, III. 338—45.

which convince him that his home is just over the hedge, where it is duly found to be.[1] And here is the way in which the instructor proposes to stir activity of limb in the young Emilius. 'In walking with him of an afternoon, I used sometimes to put in my pocket two cakes of a sort he particularly liked; we each of us ate one. One day he perceived that I had three cakes; he could easily have eaten six; he promptly dispatches his own, to ask me for the third. Nay, I said to him, I could well eat it myself, or we would divide it, but I would rather see it made the prize of a running match between the two little boys there.' The little boys run their race, and the winner devours the cake. This and subsequent repetitions of the performance at first only amused Emilius, but he presently began to reflect that to run might be good for something, and perceiving that he also had two legs, he began privately to try how fast he could run. When he thought he was strong enough, he importuned his tutor for the third cake, and on being refused, insisted on being allowed to compete for it. The habit of taking exercise was not the only advantage gained. The tutor resorted to a variety of further stratagems in order to induce the boy to find out and practise visual compass, and so forth.[2] If we consider, as we have said, first the readiness of children to suspect a stratagem wherever instruction is concerned, and next their resentment on discovering artifice of that kind, all this seems as little likely to be suc-

[1] III. 358, etc. [2] II. 263—7.

cessful, as it is assuredly contrary to Rousseau's general doctrine of leaving circumstances to lead.

In truth Rousseau's appreciation of the real nature of spontaneousness in the processes of education was essentially inadequate, and that it was so arose from a no less inadequate conception of the right influence upon the growing character, of the great principle of authority. His dread lest the child should ever be conscious of the pressure of a will external to its own, constituted a fundamental weakness of his system. The child, we are told with endless repetition, ought always to be led to suppose that it is following its own judgment or impulses, and has only them and their consequences to consider. But Rousseau could not help seeing, as he meditated on the actual development of his Emilius, that to leave him thus to the training of accident would necessarily end in very many fatal gaps and chasms. Yet the hand and will of the parent or the master could not be allowed to appear. The only alternative, therefore, was the secret preparation of artificial sets of circumstances, alike in work and in amusement. Jean Paul was wiser than Jean Jacques. 'Let not the teacher after the work also order and regulate the games. It is decidedly better not to recognise or make any order in games, than to keep it up with difficulty and send the zephyrets of pleasure through artistic bellows and air-pumps to the little flowers.'[1]

The spontaneousness which we ought to seek, does

[1] *Levana*, ch. iii. § 54.

not consist in promptly willing this or that, independently of an authority imposed from without, but in a self-acting desire to do what is right under all its various conditions, including what the child finds pleasant to itself on the one hand, and what it has good reason to suppose will be pleasant to its parents on the other. 'You must never,' Rousseau gravely warns us, 'inflict punishment upon children as punishment; it must always fall upon them as a natural consequence of their ill behaviour.'[1] But why should one of the most closely following of all these consequences be dissembled or carefully hidden from sight, namely, the effect of ill behaviour upon the contentment of the child's nearest friend? Why are the effects of conduct upon the actor's own physical well-being to be the only effects honoured with the title of being natural? Surely, while we leave to the young the widest freedom of choice, and even habitually invite them to decide for themselves between two lines of conduct, we are bound afterwards to state our approval or disapproval of their decision, so that on the next occasion they may take this anger or pleasure in others into proper account in their rough and hasty forecast, often less hasty than it seems, of the consequences of what they are about to do. One of the most important of educating influences is lost, if the young are not taught to place the feelings of others in a front place, when they think in their own simple way of what will happen to them, if they yield to a

[1] *Emile*, II. 163.

given impulse. Rousseau was quite right in insisting on practical experience of consequences as the only secure foundation for self-acting habit; he was fatally wrong in mutilating this experience by the exclusion from it of the effects of perceiving, resisting, accepting, ignoring, all will and authority from without. The great, and in many respects so admirable, school of Rousseauite philanthropists, have always been feeble on this side, alike in the treatment of the young by their instructors, and the treatment of social offenders by a government.

Again, consider the large group of excellent qualities which are associated with affectionate respect for a more fully informed authority. In a world where necessity stands for so much, it is no inconsiderable gain to have learnt the lesson of docility on easy terms in earliest days. If in another sense the will of each individual is all-powerful over his own destinies, it is best that this idea of firm purpose and a settled energy that will not be denied, should grow up in the young soul in connection with a riper wisdom and an ampler experience than its own; for then when the time for independent action comes, the force of the association will continue. Finally, although none can be vicariously wise, none sage by proxy, nor any pay for the probation of another, yet is it not a puerile wastefulness to send forth the young all bare to the ordeal, while the armour of old experience and tempered judgment hangs idle on the wall? Surely it is thus by accumulation of instruc-

tion from generation to generation, that the area of right conduct in the world is extended, and such instruction must with youth be conveyed by military word of command, as often as by philosophical persuasion of its worth. Nor is the atmosphere of command other than bracing, even to those who are commanded. It is true that both tyrants and cravens may be bred in it; the risk of this, however, is not less but greater, in that enervating atmosphere of self-regarding will, which Rousseau proposed to throw around the youth of his Emilius. If education is to be mainly conducted by force of example, it is assuredly a dreadful thing that the child is ever to have before its eyes as living type and practical exemplar, the pale figure of parents without passions, and without a will as to the conduct of those who are dependent on them. Even a slight excess of anger, impatience, and the spirit of command, would be less demoralising to the impressionable character, than the constant sight of a man artificially impassive. Rousseau is perpetually calling upon men to try to lay aside their masks; yet the model instructor whom he has created for us, is to be the most artfully and elaborately masked of all men, unless he happens to be naturally without blood and without physiognomy.

Rousseau, then, while he put away the old methods which imprisoned the young spirit in injunctions and over-solicitous monitions, yet did none the less in his own scheme imprison it in a kind of hot-house, which with its regulated temperature and artificially con-

trived access of light and air, was in many respects as little the method of nature, that is to say gave as little play for the spontaneous working and growth of the forces of nature in the youth's breast, as that regimen of the cloister which he so profoundly abhorred. Partly this was the result of a ludicrously shallow psychology. He repeats again and again that self-love is the one quality in the youthful embryo of character, from which you have to work. From this, he says, springs the desire of possessing pleasure and avoiding pain, the great fulcrum on which the lever of experience rests. Not only so, but from this same unslumbering quality of self-love you have to develope regard for others. The child's first affection for his nurse is a result of the fact that she serves his comfort, and so down to his passion in later years for his mistress. Now this is not the place for a discussion as to the ultimate atom of the complex moral sentiments of men and women, nor for an examination of the question whether the faculty of sympathy has or has not an origin independent of self-love. However that may be, no one will deny that sympathy appears in good natures extremely early, and is susceptible of rapid cultivation from the very first. Here is the only adequate key to that education of the affections, from their rudimentary expansion in the nursery, until they include the complete range of all the objects proper to them, which Rousseau in some of its most important parts so strangely asks us to postpone until the age of tolerably mature reason, and which has

then to be promoted by various artificial means, instead of having grown slowly wider with the gradual widening of experience.[1]

One secret of Rousseau's omission of this, the most important of all educating agencies, from the earlier stages of the formation of character, was the fact which is patent enough in every page, that he was not animated by that singular tenderness and almost mystic affection for the young, which breathes through the writings of some of his German followers, of Richter above all others, and which reveals to those who are sensible of it, the hold that may so easily be gained for all good purposes upon the eager sympathy of the youthful spirit. The instructor of Emilius speaks the words of a wise onlooker, sagely meditating on the ideal man, rather than of a parent who is living the life of his child through with him. Rousseau's interest in children, though perfectly sincere, was still æsthetic, moral, reasonable, rather than that pure flood of full-hearted feeling for them, which is perhaps seldom stirred except in those who have actually brought up children of their own.[2]

II.

Education being the art of preparing the young to grow into instruments of happiness for themselves and others, a writer who undertakes to speak about it

[1] See the first hundred pages of book iv. of *Emile*.

[2] The Ninth Promenade (*Rêveries*, 309), which is a vindication of his love for the young, is an exquisite piece, but it has none of the yearnings of the bowels of tenderness. See above, vol. i. 126.

must naturally have some conception of the kind of happiness at which his art aims. We have seen enough of Rousseau's own life to know what sort of ideal he would be likely to set up. It is a kind of healthier epicureanism, with enough stoicism to make happiness safe in case circumstances should frown. The man who has lived most, is not he who has counted most years, but he who has most felt life.[1] It is mere false wisdom to throw us incessantly out of ourselves, to count the present for nothing, ever to pursue without ceasing a future which flees in proportion as we advance, to try to transport ourselves from whence we are not, to some place where we shall never be.[2] He is happiest who suffers fewest pains, and he is most miserable who feels fewest pleasures. Then we have a half stoical strain. The felicity of man here below is only a negative state, to be measured by the more or less of the ills he undergoes. It is in the disproportion between desires and faculties, that our misery consists. Happiness, therefore, lies not in diminishing our desires, nor any more in extending our faculties, but in diminishing the excess of desire over faculty, and in bringing power and will into perfect balance.[3] Excepting health, strength, respect for one's self, all the goods of this life reside in opinion: excepting bodily pain and remorse of conscience, all our ills are in imagination. Death is no evil; it is only made so by half-knowledge and false wisdom. 'Live according to nature, be patient, and drive away

[1] *Emile*, I. 23. [2] II. 109. [3] II. 111.

physicians; you will not avoid death, but you will only feel it once, while they would bring it daily before your troubled imagination, and their false art, instead of prolonging your days, only hinders you from enjoying it. Suffer, die, or recover; but above all things live, up to your last hour.' It is foresight, constantly carrying us out of ourselves, that is the true source of our miseries.[1] O man, confine thy existence within thyself, and thou wilt cease to be miserable. Thy liberty, thy power, reach exactly as far as thy natural forces, and no further: all the rest is slavery and illusion. The only man who has his own will, is he who does not need, in order to have it, the arms of another person at the end of his own.[2]

The training that follows from this is obvious. The instructor has carefully to distinguish true or natural need from the need which is only fancied, or which only comes from superabundance of life. Emilius, who is brought up in the country, has nothing in his room to distinguish it from that of a peasant.[3] If he is taken to a luxurious banquet, he is bidden, instead of heedlessly enjoying it, to reflect austerely how many hundreds or thousands of hands have been employed in preparing it.[4] His preference for gay colours in his clothes is to be consulted, because this is natural and becoming to his age, but the moment he prefers a stuff merely because it is rich, behold a creature sophisticated.[5] The curse of the world is

[1] II. 113—7. [2] II. 121. [3] II. 143.
[4] III. 382. [5] II. 227.

inequality, and inequality springs from the multitude of wants, which cause us to be so much the more dependent. What makes man essentially good is to have few wants, and to abstain from comparing himself with others; what makes him essentially bad, is to have many wants, and to cling much to opinion.[1] Hence, although Emilius happened to have both wealth and good birth, he is not brought up to be a gentleman, with the prejudices and helplessness and selfishness too naturally associated with that abused name.

This cardinal doctrine of limitation of desire, with its corollary of self-sufficience, contains in itself the great maxim that Emilius and every one else must learn some trade. To work is an indispensable duty in the social man. Rich or poor, powerful or weak, every idle citizen is a knave. And every boy must learn a real trade, a trade with his hands. It is not so much a matter of learning a craft for the sake of knowing one, as for the sake of conquering the prejudices which despise it. Labour for glory, if you have not to labour from necessity. Lower yourself to the condition of the artisan, so as to be above your own. In order to reign in opinion, begin by reigning over it. All things well considered, the trade most to be preferred is that of carpenter; it is clean, useful, and capable of being carried on in the house; it demands address and diligence in the workman, and though the form of the work is determined by utility, elegance

[1] IV. 10.

and taste are still not excluded.[1] There are few prettier pictures than that where Sophie enters the workshop, and sees in amazement her young lover at the other end, in his white shirt-sleeves, his hair loosely fastened back, with a chisel in one hand and a mallet in the other, too intent upon his work to perceive even the approach of his mistress.[2]

When the revolution came, and princes and nobles wandered in indigent exile, the disciples of Rousseau pointed in unkind triumph to the advantage these unfortunate wretches would have had, if they had not been too puffed up with the vanity of feudalism, to follow the prudent example of Emilius in learning a craft. That Rousseau should have laid so much stress on the vicissitudes of fortune, which might cause even a king to be grateful one day that he had a trade at the end of his arms, is sometimes quoted as a proof of his foresight of troublous times. This, however, goes too far, because apart from the instances of such vicissitudes among the ancients, the king of Syracuse keeping school at Corinth, Alexander, son of Perseus, becoming a Roman scrivener, he actually saw Charles Edward, the Stuart pretender, wandering from court to court in search of succour and receiving only rebuffs; and he may well have known that after the troubles of 1738 a considerable number of the oligarchs of his native Geneva had gone into exile, rather than endure the humiliation of their party. Besides all this, the propriety of being able to earn

[1] *Emile*, III. 394. [2] V. 199.

one's bread by some kind of toil that would be useful in even the simplest societies, flowed necessarily from every part of his doctrine of the aims of life and the worth of character. He did, however, say, 'We approach a state of crisis and an age of revolutions,' which proved true, but he added too much when he pronounced it impossible that the great monarchies of Europe could have long to last.[1] And it is certain that the only one of the great monarchies which did actually fall, would have had a far better chance of surviving, if Lewis XVI. had been as expert in the trade of king, as he was in that of making locks and bolts.

From this semi-stoical ideal there followed certain social notions, of which Rousseau had the distinction of being the most powerful propagator. As has so often been said, his contemporaries were willing to leave social questions alone, provided only the government would suffer the free expression of opinion in literature and science. Rousseau went deeper. His moral conception of individual life and character contained in itself a social conception, and he did not

[1] *Emile*, III. 392, and note. A still more remarkable passage, as far as it goes, is that in the Confessions (xi. 136):—'The disasters of an unsuccessful war, all of which came from the fault of the government, the incredible disorder of the finances, the continual dissensions of the administration, divided as it was among two or three ministers at open war with one another, and who for the sake of hurting one another dragged the kingdom into ruin; the general discontent of the people, and of all the orders of the state; the obstinacy of a wrong-headed woman, who always sacrificing her better judgment, if indeed she had any, to her tastes, dismissed the most capable from office, to make room for her favourites . . . . all this prospect of a coming break-up made me think of seeking shelter elsewhere.'

shrink from boldly developing it. The rightly constituted man suffices for himself and is free from prejudices. He has arms, and knows how to use them; he has his few wants, and knows how to satisfy them. Nurtured in the most absolute freedom, he can think of no worse ill than servitude. He attaches himself to the beauty which perishes not, limiting his desires to his condition, learning to lose whatever may be taken away from him, to place himself above events, and to detach his heart from loved objects without a pang.[1] He pities miserable kings, who are the bondsmen of all that seems to obey them; he pities false sages, who are fast bound in the chains of their empty renown; he pities the silly rich, martyrs to their own ostentation.[2] All his sympathies, therefore, naturally flow away from these, the great of the earth, to those who lead the stoic's life perforce. 'It is the common people who compose the human race; what is not the people is hardly worth taking into account. Man is the same in all ranks; that being so, the ranks which are most numerous, deserve most respect. Before one who thinks, all civil distinctions vanish: he marks the same passions and the same feelings in the clown, as in the man covered with reputation; he can only distinguish their speech, and a varnish more or less elaborately laid on. Study people of this humble condition; you will perceive that under another sort of language, they have as much intelligence as you, and more good sense. Respect your species: reflect that it is essen-

[1] V. 220. [2] IV. 85.

tially made up of the collection of peoples; that if every king and every philosopher were cut off from among them, they would scarcely be missed, and the world would go none the worse.'[1] As it is, the universal spirit of the law in every country is invariably to favour the strong against the weak, and him who has, against him who has not. The many are sacrificed to the few; the specious names of justice and subordination serve only as instruments for violence and arms for iniquity; the ostentatious orders who pretend to be useful to the others, are in truth only useful to themselves at the expense of the others.[2]

This was carrying on the work which had already been begun in the New Heloïsa, as we have seen, but in the Emilius it is pushed with a gravity and a directness, that could not be imparted to the picture of a fanciful and arbitrarily chosen situation. The only writer who has approached Rousseau, so far as I know, in fulness and depth of expression in proclaiming the sorrows and wrongs of the poor blind crowd, who painfully drag along the car of triumphant civili-

[1] *Emile*, IV. 38—9. Hence, we suppose, the famous reply to Lavoisier's request that his life might be spared from the guillotine for a fortnight, in order that he might complete some experiments, that the Republic has no need of chemists.

[2] IV. 65. Jefferson, who was American minister in France from 1784 to 1789, and absorbed a great many of the ideas then afloat, writes in words that seem as if they were borrowed from Rousseau:—'I am convinced that those societies (as the Indians) which live without government, enjoy in their general mass an infinitely greater degree of happiness than those who live under European governments. Among the former public opinion is in the state of law, and restrains morals as powerfully as laws ever did anywhere. Among the latter, under pretence of governing, they have divided their nation into two classes, wolves and sheep. I do not exaggerate; this is a true picture of Europe.'—Tucker's *Life of Jefferson*, i. 255.

sation with its handful of occupants, is the author of the *Book of the People.* Lamennais even surpasses Rousseau in the profundity of his pathos; his pictures of the life of hut and hovel are as sincere and as touching; and there is in them, instead of the anger and bitterness of the older author, righteous as that was, a certain heroism of pity and devoted sublimity of complaint, which lift the soul up from resentment into divine moods of compassion and resolve, and stir us like a tale of noble action.[1] It was Rousseau, however, who first sounded the note of which the religion that had once been the champion and consoler of the common people, seemed long to have lost even the tradition. Yet the teaching was not constructive, because the ideal man was not made truly social. Emilius is brought up in something of the isolation of the imaginary savage of the state of nature. He marries, and then he and his wife seem only fitted to lead a life of detachment from the interests of the world in which they are placed. Social or political education, that is the training which character receives from the medium in which it grows, is left out of account, and so is the correlative process of preparation for the various conditions and exigencies which belong to that medium, until it is too late to take its natural

[1] Lamennais was influenced by Rousseau throughout. In the *Essay on Indifference* he often appeals to him as the vindicator of the religious sentiment (*e.g.*, i. 21, 52, iv. 375, etc. Ed. 1837). The same influence is seen still more markedly in the *Words of a Believer* (1835), when dogma had departed, and he was left with a kind of dual deism, thus being less estranged from Rousseau than in the first days (*e.g.*, § xix. 'Tous naissent égaux,' etc. § xxi., etc.). The *Book of the People* is thoroughly Rousseauite.

place in character. Nothing can be clumsier than the way in which Rousseau proposes to teach Emilius the existence and nature of his relations with his fellows. And the reason of this was that he had never himself in the course of his ruminations, willingly thought of Emilius as being in a condition of active social relation, a citizen of a state.

III.

There appear to be three dominant states of mind, with groups of faculties associated with each of them, which it is the business of the instructor firmly to establish in the character of the future man. The first is a resolute and unflinching respect for truth; for the conclusions, that is to say, of the scientific reason, comprehending also a constant anxiety to take all possible pains that such conclusions shall be rightly drawn. Connected with this is the discipline of the whole range of intellectual faculties, from the simple habit of correct observation, down to the highly complex habit of weighing and testing the value of evidence. This very important branch of early discipline, Rousseau for reasons of his own which we have already often referred to, cared little about, and throws very little light upon, beyond one or two extremely sensible precepts of the negative kind, warning us against beginning too soon, and forcing an apparent progress too rapidly. The second fundamental state in a rightly formed character is a deep feeling for things of the spirit which are unknown and

incommensurable; a sense of awe, mystery, sublimity, and the fateful bounds of life at its beginning and its end. Here is the religious side, and what Rousseau has to say of this we shall presently see. It is enough now to remark that Emilius was never to hear the name of a god or supreme being, until his reason was fairly ripened. The third state, which is at least as difficult to bring to healthy perfection as either of the other two, is a passion for justice.

The little use which Rousseau made of this momentous much-embracing word, which names the highest peak of social virtue, is a very striking circumstance. The reason would seem to be that his sense of the relations of men with one another was not virile enough to comprehend the deep austerer lines which mark the brow of the benignant divinity of justice. In the one place in his writings where he speaks of justice freely, he shows a narrowness of idea, which was perhaps as much due to intellectual confusion, as to lack of moral robustness. He says excellently that 'love of the human race is nothing else in us but love of justice,' and that 'of all the virtues, justice is that which contributes most to the common good of men.' While enjoining the discipline of pity as one of the noblest of sentiments, he warns us against letting it degenerate into weakness, and insists that we should only surrender ourselves to it, when it accords with justice.[1] But that is all. What constitutes justice, what is its standard, what its source, what its sanction,

[1] *Emile*, IV. 105.

whence the extraordinary holiness with which its name has come to be invested among the most highly civilised societies of men, we are never told, nor do we ever see that our teacher had seen the possibility of such questions being asked. If they had been propounded to him he would, it is most likely, have fallen back upon the convenient mystery of the natural law, the current phrase of that time which was meant to embody a hypothetical experience of perfect human relations, in an expression of the widest generality. If so, this would have had to be impressed upon the mind of Emilius in the same way as other mysteries. As a matter of fact Emilius was led through pity up to humanity, or sociality in an imperfect signification, and there left without a further guide to define the marks of truly social conduct.

This imperfection was a necessity, inseparable from Rousseau's tenacity in keeping society in the background of the picture of life which he opened to his pupil. He said, indeed, 'We must study society by men, and men by society; those who would treat politics and morality apart, will never understand anything about either one or the other.'[1] This is profoundly true, but we hardly see in the morality which is designed for Emilius, the traces of political elements; yet without some gradually unfolded presentation of society as a whole, it is scarcely possible to implant the idea of justice with any hope of large fertility. You may begin at a very early time to

[1] *Emile*, IV. 63.

develope, even from the primitive quality of self-love, a notion of equity and a respect for it, but the vast conception of social justice can only find room in a character that has been made spacious by habitual contemplation of the height and breadth and close compactedness of the fabric of the relations that bind man to man, and of the share, integral or infinitesimally fractional, that each has in the happiness or woe of other souls. And this contemplation should begin, when we prepare the foundation of all the other maturer habits. Youth can hardly recognise too soon the enormous unresting machine which bears us ceaselessly along, because we can hardly learn too soon that its force and direction depend on the play of human motives, of which our own for good or evil form an inevitable part when the ripe years come. To one reared with the narrow care devoted to Emilius, or with the capacious negligence in which the majority are left to grow to manhood, the society on to which they are thrown is a moral wilderness, through which they make such way as they can, with egoism for their only trusty instrument, either in the form of a bludgeon, as with the most part, or in that of a delicately adjusted and fastidiously decorated compass, as with an Emilius, but in either case without perception that the gross outer contact of men with one another is transformed by worthiness of common aim and loyal faith in common excellences, into a thing beautiful and generous. It is our business to fix and root the habit of thinking of that

moral union, into which, as Kant has so admirably expressed it, the *pathological* necessities of situation that first compelled social concert, have been gradually transmuted. Instead of this, it is exactly the primitive pathological conditions, which a narrow theory of education brings first into prominence, as if knowledge of origins were indispensable to a right attachment to the transformed conditions of a maturer system.

It has been said that Rousseau founds all morality upon personal interest, perhaps even more specially than Helvétius himself,[1] who was supposed to have revealed all the world's secret. The accusation is just. Emilius will enter adult life without the germs of that social conscience, which animates a man with all the associations of duty and right, of gratitude for the past and resolute hope for the future, in face of the great body of which he finds himself a part. 'I observe,' says Rousseau, 'that in the modern ages, men have no hold upon one another save through force and interest, while the ancients on the other hand acted much more by persuasion and the affections of the soul.'[2] The reason was that with the ancients, supposing them to be the Greeks and Romans, the social conscience was so much wider in its scope, than the comparatively narrow fragment of duty, which is supposed to come under the sacred power of conscience in the more complex and less closely contained organization of a modern state. The neighbours to whom a man owed duty in those times, comprehended all the

[1] M. Barante. [2] *Emile*, IV. 273.

members of his state; the neighbours of the modern preacher of duty are either the few persons with whom each of us is brought into actual and palpable contact, or else the whole multitude of dwellers on the earth,—a conception that for many ages to come will remain with the majority of men and women too vague to exert an energetic and concentrating influence upon action, and will lead them no further than a watery, uncoloured, and nerveless cosmopolitanism.

What the young need to have taught to them in this too little cultivated region, is that they are born not mere atoms floating independent and apart for a season through a terraqueous medium, and sucking up as much more than their share of nourishment as they can seize; nor citizens of the world with no more definite duty than to keep their feelings towards all their fellows in a steady simmer of bland complacency; but soldiers in a host, citizens of a polity whose boundaries are not set down in maps, members of a church the handwriting of whose ordinances is not in the hieroglyphs of idle mystery, nor its hope and recompense in the lands beyond death. They need to be taught that they owe a share of their energies to the great struggle which is in ceaseless progress in all societies in an endless variety of forms, between new truth and old prejudice, between love of self or class and solicitous passion for justice, between the obstructive indolence and inertia of the many and the generous mental activity of the few. This is the

sphere and definition of the social conscience. The good causes of enlightenment and justice in all lands, here is the church militant in which we should early seek to enrol the young, and the true state to which they should be taught that they owe the duties of active and arduous citizenship; these the struggles, with which the modern instructor should associate those virtues of fortitude, tenacity, silent patience, outspoken energy, readiness to assert ourselves and readiness to efface ourselves, willingness to suffer and resolution to inflict suffering, which men of old knew how to show for their gods, or their sovereign, or even out of mere love of adventure, or the yet unworthier love of gain. But the ideal of Emilius was an ideal of quietism; to possess his own soul in patience, with a suppressed intelligence, a suppressed sociality, without a single spark of generous emulation in the courses of strong-fibred virtue, or a single thrill of heroical pursuit after so much as one great forlorn cause.

'If it once comes to him, in reading these parallels of the famous ancients, to desire to be another rather than himself, were this other Socrates, were he Cato, you have missed the mark; he who begins to make himself a stranger to himself, is not long before he forgets himself altogether.'[1] But if a man only nurses the conception of his own personality, for the sake of keeping his own peace and self-contained comfort at a glow of easy warmth, assuredly the best thing that

[1] *Emile*, IV. 83.

can befall him is that he should perish, lest his example should infect others with the same base contagion. Excessive personality militant is often wholesome, excessive personality that only hugs itself is under all circumstances chief among unclean things. Thus even Rousseau's finest monument of moral enthusiasm is fatally tarnished by the cold damp breath of isolation, and the very book which contained so many elements of new life for a state, was at bottom the apotheosis of social despair.

IV.

The great agent in fostering the rise to vigour and uprightness of a social conscience, apart from the yet more powerful instrument of a strong and energetic public spirit at work around the growing character, must be found in the study of history rightly directed with a view to this end. It is here, in observing the long processes of time and appreciating the slowly accumulating sum of endeavour, that the mind gradually comes to read the great lessons how close is the bond that links men together, and gradually begins to acquire the habit of considering what are the conditions of wise social activity, its limits, its objects, its rewards, what is the capacity of collective achievement, and of what sort is the significance and purport of the small span of time that cuts off the yesterday of our society from its to-morrow.

Rousseau had very rightly forbidden the teaching of history to young children, on the ground that the

essence of history lies in the moral relations between the bare facts which it recounts, and that the terms and ideas of these relations are wholly beyond the intellectual grasp of the very young.[1] He might have based his objections equally well upon the impossibility of little children knowing the meaning of the multitude of descriptive terms which make up a historical manual, or realising the relations between events in bare point of time, although childhood may perhaps be a convenient period for some mechanical acquisition of dates. According to Rousseau, history was to appear very late in the educational course, when the youth was almost ready to enter the world. It was to be the finishing study, from which he should learn not sociality either in its scientific or its higher moral sense, but the composition of the heart of man, in a safer way than through actual intercourse with society. Society might make him either cynical or frivolous. History would bring him the same information, without subjecting him to the same perils. In society you only hear the words of men; to know man you must observe his actions, and actions are only unveiled in history.[2] This view is hardly worth discussing. The subject of history is not the heart of man, but the movements of societies. Moreover the oracles of history are entirely dumb to one who seeks from them maxims for the shaping of daily conduct,

[1] *Emile*, II. 185. See the previous page for some equally prudent observations on the folly of teaching geography to little children.

[2] *Emile*, IV. 68.

or living instruction as to the motives, aims, caprices, capacities of self-restraint, self-sacrifice, and all the rest of the almost infinitely varying qualities that make up the characters of those with whom the occasions of life bring us into contact. For all these things we go for theory to the science of the laws of the formation of human character, and in practice to as wide an experience of the actual ways of the world about us, as circumstances will permit, or as we may choose to endure.

It is true that at the close of the other part of his education, Emilius was to travel and there find the comment upon the completed circle of his studies.[1] But excellent as travel is for some of the best of those who have the opportunity, still for many it is valueless for lack of the faculty of curiosity, and for the great majority it is impossible for lack of opportunity; therefore to trust so much as Rousseau did to the effect of travelling, is to leave a large chasm in education unbridged.

It is interesting, however, to notice some of Rousseau's notions about history as an instrument for conveying moral instruction, a few of them are so good, and others so characteristically narrow. 'The worst historians for a young man,' he says, 'are those who judge. The facts, the facts; then let him judge for himself. If the author's judgment is for ever guiding him, he is only seeing with the eye of another, and as soon as this eye fails him, he sees nothing.'

[1] V. 231, etc.

This is unquestionably in the right direction; only, however, if we remember at the same time, first, that in those transactions which it is best worth while for the student to meditate upon, the mode in which the facts are chosen and presented, inevitably contains a more or less emphatic judgment upon them; secondly, that the faculty of historical judgment comes not by the mere will to observe, without the discipline of many examples of wise reasoning from the recorded facts, and that in this, as in all other subjects, it is wasteful not to take advantage of the accumulation of tested judgment which our predecessors have left behind them.

Modern history—and Rousseau like many other persons who use the term, is not careful to mark its limits, though Bossuet's discourse might have taught him better—is not fit for instruction, not only because it has no physiognomy, all our men being exactly like one another, but because our historians, intent on brilliance above all other things, think of nothing so much as painting highly coloured portraits, which for the most part represent nothing at all.[1] Of course such a judgment as this implies an ignorance alike of the ends and meaning of history, which, considering that he was living in the midst of a singular revival of historical study, is not easy to pardon. If we are to look only to perfection of form and arrangement, it may have been right for one living in the middle of the last century to place the ancients in the first rank without competitors. But the author of the Dis-

[1] IV. 71.

course upon literature and the arts might have been expected to look beyond composition, and the contemporary of Voltaire's *Essai sur les Mœurs* (1754—7) might have been expected to know that the profitable experience of the human race did not close with the fall of the Roman republic. Among the ancient historians, he counted Thucydides to be the true model, because he reports facts without judging, and omits none of the circumstances proper for enabling us to judge of them for ourselves—though how Rousseau knew what facts Thucydides has omitted, I confess myself unable to divine. Then come Cæsar's Commentaries and Xenophon's Retreat of the Ten Thousand. The good Herodotus, without portraits and without maxims, but abounding in details the most capable of interesting and pleasing, would perhaps be the best of historians, if only these details did not so often degenerate into puerilities. Livy is unsuited to youth, because he is political and a rhetorician. Tacitus is the book of the old; you must have learnt the art of reading facts, before you can be trusted with maxims. The whole instruction of youth ought to lie among particular rules.[1]

The drawback of histories such as those of Thucydides and Cæsar, he admits to be that they dwell almost entirely on war, omitting the true life of nations, which belongs to the unwritten chronicles of peace. This leads him to the equally just reflection that historians, while recounting facts, omit the gradual

[1] IV. 72—3.

and progressive causes which led to them. 'They often find in a battle lost or won the reason of a revolution, which even before the battle was already inevitable. War scarcely does more than bring into full light events determined by moral causes, which historians can seldom penetrate.'[1] He recognised that some of his contemporaries had turned their thoughts in this direction, and he would have been blind if he had not, but he doubted whether truth would gain by their industry, on account of the fury for systems which had seized them, and led them to look at things less as they are, than as they harmonize with preconceived schemes—an objection not without strong foundation. A third complaint against the study which he began by recommending as a proper introduction to the knowledge of man, is that it does not present men but actions, or at least men only in their parade costume and in certain chosen moments, and he justly reproaches writers alike of history and biography, for omitting those trifling strokes and homely anecdotes, which reveal the true physiognomy of character. 'Remain then for ever, without bowels, without nature; harden your hearts of cast iron in your trumpery decency, and make yourselves despicable by force of dignity.'[2] And so after all, by a common stroke of impetuous inconsistency, he forsakes history, and falls back upon the ancient biographies, because, all the low and familiar details being banished from modern style, however true and characteristic, men are

[1] *Emile*, IV. 73. [2] IV. 77.

as elaborately tricked out by our authors in their private lives, as they were tricked out upon the stage of the world.

V.

As women are from the constitution of things the educators of us all at the most critical periods, and mainly of their own sex from the beginning to the end of education, the writer of the most imperfect treatise on this world-interesting subject can hardly avoid saying something on the upbringing of women. Such a writer may start from one of three points of view; he may consider the woman as destined to be a wife, or a mother, or a human being; as the companion of a man, as the rearer of the young, or as an independent personality, endowed with gifts, talents, possibilities, in less or greater number, and capable as in the case of men, of being trained to the worst or the best uses, or left to rust unused. Of course to every one who looks into life, each of these three ideals melts into the other two, and we can only think of them effectively as blended. Yet we test a writer's appreciation of the conditions of human progress by observing the function which he makes most prominent. A man's whole thought of the worth and aim of womanhood depends upon the generosity and elevation of the ideal which is silently present in his mind, while he is specially meditating the relations of woman as wife or as mother. Unless he is really capable of thinking of them as human beings, independently of

these two functions, he is sure to have comparatively mean notions in connection with them even in respect of the functions which he makes paramount.

Rousseau breaks down here. The unsparing fashion in which he developed the theory of individualism in the case of Emilius, and insisted on man being allowed to grow into the man of nature, instead of the man of art and manufacture, might have led us to expect that when he came to speak of women, he would suffer equity and logic to have their way, and give equally free room in the two halves of the human race for the development of natural force and capacity. If, as he begins by saying, he wishes to bring up Emilius, not to be a merchant nor a physician nor a soldier nor to the practice of any other special calling, but to be first and above all a man, to whom the special incidents might be added, why should not Sophie too be brought up first and above all a human being with reason, emotions, interests, in whom the special qualifications of wifehood and motherhood may be developed in their due order? Emilius is a man first, a husband and a father afterwards and secondarily. How can Sophie be a companion for him, and an instructor for their children during their tender years, unless she likewise has been left in the hands of nature, and had the same chances permitted to her as were given to her destined mate? Again, the pictures of the New Heloïsa would have led us to conceive the ideal of womanly function not so much in the wife, as in the house-mother, attached by esteem and sober affection to her hus-

band, but having for her chief functions to be the gentle guardian of her little ones, and the mild, firm, and prudent administrator of a cheerful and well-ordered household. In the last book of the Emilius, which treats of the education of girls, education is reduced within the compass of an even narrower ideal than this. We are confronted with the oriental conception of women. Every principle which has been followed in the education of Emilius, is reversed in the education of women. Opinion, which is the tomb of virtue among men, is among women its high throne. The whole education of women ought to be relative to men; to please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honoured by them, to console them, to render their lives agreeable and sweet to them,—these are the duties which ought to be taught to women from their childhood. Every girl ought to have the religion of her mother, and every wife that of her husband. Not being in a condition to judge for themselves, they ought to receive the decision of fathers and husbands as that of the church. And since authority is the rule of faith for women, it is not so much a matter of explaining to them the reasons for belief, as for expounding clearly to them what to believe. Although boys are not to hear of the idea of god until they are fifteen, because they are not in a condition to apprehend it, yet girls who are still less in a condition to apprehend it, are *therefore* to have it imparted to them at an earlier age. Woman is created to give way to man, and to suffer his injustice.

Her empire is an empire of gentleness, mildness, and complaisance. Her orders are caresses, and her threats are tears. Girls ought not only to be made laborious and vigilant; they ought also very early to be accustomed to being thwarted and kept in restraint. This misfortune, if they feel it one, is inseparable from their sex, and if ever they attempt to escape from it, they will only suffer misfortunes still more cruel in consequence.[1]

After a series of oriental and obscurantist propositions of this kind, it is of little purpose to tell us that women have more intelligence and men more genius; that women observe, while men reason; that men will philosophize better upon the human heart, while women will be more skilful in reading it.[2] And it is rather like a mockery to end the matter by a fervid assurance, that in spite of prejudices that have their origin in the manners of the time, the enthusiasm for what is worthy and noble is no more foreign to women than it is to men, and that there is nothing which under the guidance of nature may not be obtained from them as well as from ourselves.[3] Finally there is a complete surrender of the obscurantist position in such a sentence as this: 'I only know for either sex two really distinct classes; one the people who think, the other the people who do not think, and this difference comes almost entirely from education. A man of the first of these classes ought not to marry into the

[1] *Emile*, V. 22, 53—4, 101, 128—32.
[2] *Emile*, V. 78. [3] V. 122.

other; for the greatest charm of companionship is wanting, when having a wife he is reduced to think by himself. It is only a cultivated spirit which provides agreeable commerce, and 'tis a cheerless thing for a father of a family who loves his home, to be obliged to shut himself up within himself, and to have no one about him who understands him. Besides, how is a woman who has no habits of reflection to bring up her children?'[1] Nothing could be more excellently urged; but how is a woman to have habits of reflection, when she has been constantly brought up in habits of the closest mental bondage, trained always to consider her first business to be the pleasing of some man, and her instruments not reasonable persuasion, but caressing and crying?

This pernicious nonsense was mainly due, like nearly all his most serious errors, to Rousseau's want of a conception of improvement in human affairs. If he had been filled with this conception, as Turgot, Condorcet, and others were, he would have been forced, as they were, to meditate upon changes in the education and the recognition accorded to women, as one of the first conditions of improvement. For lack of this, he contributed nothing to the most important branch of the subject which he had undertaken to treat. He was always taunting the champions of reigning systems of training for boys, with the vicious or feeble men whom he thought he saw on every hand around him. The same kind of answer obviously meets the

[1] V. 129—30.

current idea, which he adopted with a few idyllic decorations of his own, of the type of the relations between men and women. That type practically reduces marriage in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred to a dolorous parody of a social partnership; and it does more than any one other cause to keep societies back, because it prevents one half of the members of a society from cultivating all their natural energies; so it produces a waste of helpful quality as immeasurable as it is deplorable, and besides rearing these creatures of mutilated faculty to be the intellectually demoralising companions of the remaining half of their own generation, makes them the mothers and the earliest and most influential instructors of the whole of the generation that comes after.[1] Of course, if any one believes that the existing arrangements of a western community are the most successful that we can ever hope to bring into operation, we need not complain of Rousseau. If not, and if we believe that those arrangements are susceptible of being so altered as to add to the sum of human happiness to a degree which we are now unable to realise, then it is only reasonable to suppose that a considerable portion of the change will be effected in the hitherto neglected and subordinate half of the race, by providing them with some more self-respecting aim than giving pleasure to men, and some worthier instruments of success in life

[1] Well did Jean Paul say—'If we regard all life as an educational institution, a circumnavigator of the world is less influenced by all the nations he has seen, than by his nurse.'—*Levana.*

than tears and caresses. That re-constitution of the family which Rousseau and others among his contemporaries rightly sought after as one of the most pressing needs of the time, was essentially impossible, so long as the typical woman was the adornment of a semi-philosophic seraglio, a sort of compromise between the frowzy ideal of an English bourgeois, and the impertinent ideal of a Parisian gallant. The grievous mistake of Condorcet and others in defending the free gratification of sensual passion, as one of the conditions of happiness and making the most of our lives,[1] was not at bottom more fatal to the maintenance and order of the family, than Rousseau's enervating notion, of keeping women in strict intellectual and moral subjection, was fatal to the family as the true school of high and equal companionship, and the fruitful seed-ground of wise activities and new hopes for each fresh generation.

This was one side of Rousseau's reactionary tendencies. Fortunately for the revolution of thirty years later, which illustrated the gallery of heroic women with some of its most splendid names, his power was in this respect neutralised by other stronger tendencies in the general spirit of the age. The aristocracy of sex was subjected to the same destructive criticism as the aristocracy of birth. The same feeling for justice which inspired the demand for freedom and equality of opportunity among men, led to the demand for the

[1] *Tableau des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain.* *Œuv.*, vi. pp. 264, 523—6, and elsewhere. [Ed. 1847—9.]

same freedom and equality of opportunity between men and women. If the reformers of the eighteenth century were eager in their intellectual curiosity, and ardent for truth and new knowledge, they were fully alive to the injustice of depriving half the race of all part and share in this glorious outburst of morning light, as they were fully alive to the addition which their own power of search and hope would receive, if ignorance and numbing indifference in their closest companions were replaced by the helpful and understanding sympathy of fellow-workers. All this was part of the energy of the time which Rousseau disliked with undisguised bitterness. It broke inconveniently in upon his quietist visions. He had no conception, with his sensuous brooding imagination never wholly purged of grossness, of that high and pure type of women, which French history so often produced in the seventeenth century, and who were not quite wanting towards the close of the eighteenth, a type in which devotion went with force, and austerity with sweetness, and divine candour and transparent innocence with energetic loyalty and intellectual uprightness and a firmly set will. Such thoughts were not for Rousseau, a dreamer led by his senses. Perhaps they are for none of us any more. When we turn to modern literature from the pages in which Fénélon speaks of the education of girls, who does not feel that the world has lost a sacred accent, that some ineffable essence has passed out from our hearts? We may have gained something in know-

ledge, in depth of analysis, but may be we do no ill in taking our gain with a sigh of far-off regret.

The fifth book of Emilius is not a chapter on the education of women, but an idyll. We have already seen the circumstances under which Rousseau composed it, in a profound and delicious solitude, in the midst of woods and streams, with the fragrance of the orange-flower poured around him, and in continual ecstasy.[1] As an idyll it is delicious; as a serious contribution to the hardest of problems it is naught. The sequel, by a stroke of matchless whimsicality, unless it be meant, as it perhaps may have been, for a piece of deep tragic irony, is the best refutation that Rousseau's most energetic adversary could have desired, for the Sophie who has been educated on the oriental principle, has presently to confess a flagrant infidelity to the blameless Emilius, her lord.[2]

VI.

Yet the sum of the merits of Emilius as a writing upon education is not to be lightly counted. Its value lies, as has been said of his romance, in the spirit which animates it, and communicates itself with vivid force to the reader. It is one of the seminal books in the history of literature, and of such books the worth resides less in the parts than in the whole. It touched the deeper things of character. It filled parents with a sense of the dignity and moment of their task. It cleared away the accumulation of clogging pre-

[1] See above, p. 9.

[2] *Emile et Sophie*, i.

judices and obscure inveterate usage, which made education one of the dark formalistic arts; and it admitted floods of light and air into the tightly closed nurseries and schoolrooms. It effected the substitution of growth for mechanism. A strong current of manliness, wholesomeness, simplicity, self-reliance, was sent by it through Europe, while its eloquence was the most powerful adjuration ever addressed to parental affection to cherish the young life in all love and considerate solicitude. It was the veritable charter of youthful deliverance. The first immediate effect of Emilius in France was mainly on the religious side. It was the christian religion that needed to be avenged, rather than education that needed to be amended, and the press overflowed with replies to that profession of faith which we shall consider in the next chapter. Still there was also an immense quantity of educational books and pamphlets, which is to be set down first to the suppression of the Jesuits, the great educating order, and the vacancy which they left, and next to the impulse given by the Emilius to a movement from which the book itself had originally been an outcome.[1] But why try to state the influence of Emilius on France in this way? To strike the account truly, would be to write the history of the first French Revolution.[2]

In Germany Emilius had great power. There it

[1] For an account of some of these, see Grimm's *Corr. Lit.*, iii. 211, 252, 347, etc. Also *Corr. Inéd.*, p. 143. Also Diderot, *Œuv.*, i. 537.

[2] For the early date at which Rousseau's power began to meet recognition, see D'Alembert to Voltaire, July 31, 1762.

fell in with the extraordinary movement towards naturalness and freedom of which we have already spoken.[1] Herder wrote with enthusiasm to his then beloved Caroline of the 'divine Emilius,' but its influence on him was wide and general, rather than specially educational, as it was sure to be, falling on a rich mind. Basedow (1723), that strange, restless, and most ill-regulated person, was seized with an almost phrenetic enthusiasm for Rousseau's educational theories, translated them into German, and repeated them in his works over and over again with an incessant iteration. Lavater (1741—1801), who differed from Basedow in being a fervent christian of soft mystic faith, was thrown into company with him in 1774, and grew equally eager with him in the cause of reforming education in the Rousseauite sense. Pestalozzi (1746—1827), the most systematic, popular, and permanently successful of all the educational reformers, borrowed his spirit and his principles mainly from the Emilius, though he gave larger extension and more intelligent exactitude to their application. Jean Paul the Unique, in the preface to his Levana, or Doctrine of Education (1806), one of

[1] See above, p. 32, and p. 188.

[2] The suggestion of the speculations with which Lavater's name is most commonly associated, is to be found in the Emilius. 'It is supposed that physiognomy is only a development of features already marked by nature. For my part, I should think that besides this development, the features of a man's countenance form themselves insensibly and take their expression from the frequent and habitual wearing into them of certain affections of the soul. These affections mark themselves in the countenance, nothing is more certain; and when they grow into habits, they must leave durable impressions upon it.'—IV. 49—50.

the most excellent of all books on the subject, declares that among previous works to which he owes a debt, 'first and last he names Rousseau's Emilius; no preceding work can be compared to his; in no previous work on education was the ideal so richly combined with the actual,' and so forth.[1]

In our own country Emilius was translated as soon as it appeared, and must have been widely read, for a second version of the translation was called for in a very short time. So far as a cursory survey gives one a right to speak, its influence here in the field of education is not very perceptible. That subject did not yet, nor for some time to come, excite much active thought in England. Rousseau's speculations on society both in the Emilius and elsewhere seem to have attracted more attention. Reference has already been made to Paley.[2] Adam Ferguson's celebrated Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767) has many allusions, direct and indirect, to Rousseau.[3] Kames's Sketches of the History of Man (1774) abounds still more copiously in references to Emilius, sometimes to controvert its author, more often to cite him as an authority worthy of respect, and Rousseau's crude notions about women are cited with special acceptance.[4] Cowper was probably thinking of the Savoyard Vicar, when he wrote the energetic lines in the Task, beginning 'Haste now, philosopher, and

[1] Author's Preface, x.

[2] See above, p. 187.

[3] *E.g.* pp. 8, 198, 204—5.

[4] *E.g.* Bk. I. § 5, p. 279. § 6, p. 406, 419, etc. (the portion concerning the female sex).

set him free,' scornfully defying the deist to rescue apostate man.[1] Nor should we omit what was counted so important a book in its day as Godwin's Enquiry concerning Political Justice (1793), which is perhaps more French in its spirit than any other work of equal consequence in our literature of politics, and in the composition of which the author was avowedly a student of Rousseau, as well as of the members of the materialistic school, though Godwin assuredly kept an independent judgment.[2]

In fine we may add that Emilius was the first expression of that democratic tendency in education, which political and other circumstances gradually made general alike in England, France, and Germany; a tendency, that is, to look on education as a process concerning others besides the rich and the well-born. As has often been remarked, Ascham, Milton, Locke, Fénélon, busy themselves about the instruction of young gentlemen and gentlewomen. The rest of the world are supposed to be sufficiently provided for by the education of circumstance. Since the middle of the eighteenth century this monopolizing conception has vanished, along with and through the same general agencies as the corresponding conception of social monopoly. Rousseau enforced the production

[1] Vv. 670—703. We have already seen (above, p. 40, *n.*) that Cowper had read Emilius, and the mocking reference to the deist as 'an Orpheus and omnipotent in song,' coincides with Rousseau's comparison of the Savoyard Vicar to 'the divine Orpheus singing the first hymn' (*Em.*, IV. 205).

[2] For references to Rousseau in Godwin's *Political Justice*, see Pref., p. ix., Bk. I. ch. iv., III. ii., V. vii. xvi., etc.

of a natural and self-sufficing man as the object of education, and showed, or did his best to show, the infinite capacity of the young for that simple and natural cultivation. This easily and directly led people to reflect that such a capacity was not confined to the children of the rich, nor the hope of producing a natural and sufficing man narrowed to those who had every external motive placed around them for being neither natural nor self-sufficing.

Voltaire pronounced Emilius a stupid romance, but admitted that it contained fifty pages which he would have bound in morocco. These, we may be sure, concerned religion; in truth it was the Savoyard Vicar's profession of faith, which stirred France far more than the upbringing of the natural man in things temporal. Let us pass to that eloquent document which is inserted in the middle of the Emilius, as the expression of the religious opinion that best befits the man of nature—a document most hyperbolically counted by some French enthusiasts for the spiritualist philosophy and the religion of sentiment, as the noblest monument of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SAVOYARD VICAR.

THE band of dogmatic atheists who met round D'Holbach's dinner table, indulged a shallow and futile hope, if it was not an ungenerous one, when they expected the immediate advent of a generation with whom a humane and rational philosophy should displace, not merely the superstitions which had grown around the christian dogma, but every root and fragment of theistic conception. A hope of this kind implied a singularly random idea, alike of the hold which christianity had taken of the religious emotion in western Europe, and of the durableness of those conditions in human character, to which some belief in a deity, with a greater or fewer number of good attributes, brings solace and nourishment. A movement like that of christianity does not pass through a group of societies, and leave no trace behind. It springs from many other sources besides that of adherence to the truth of its dogmas, and the stream of its influence must continue to flow, long after adherence to the letter has been confined to the least informed portions of a community. The encyclopædists knew that they

had sapped religious dogma and shaken ecclesiastical organization. They forgot that religious sentiment on the one hand, and habit of respect for authority on the other, were left behind. They had convinced themselves by a host of persuasive analogies that the universe is an automatic machine, and man only an industrious particle in the stupendous whole; that a final cause is not cognisable by our limited intelligence; and that to make emotion in this or any other respect a test of objective truth and a ground of positive belief, is to lower both truth and the reason which is its single arbiter. They forgot that imagination is as active in man as his reason, and that a craving for mental peace may become much stronger in most men, than passion for demonstrated truth. Christianity had given to this craving in western Europe a definite mould, which was not to be effaced in a day, and one or two of whose lines mark a permanent and noble acquisition to the highest forces of human nature. There will have to be wrought a profounder and more far-spreading modification than any which the French atheists could effect, before the debilitating influences of the old creed can be effaced, its elevating influences finally separated from them, and preserved in more beneficent form and in an association less questionable to the understanding.

Neither a purely negative nor a direct attack can ever suffice. There must be a coincidence of many silently oppugnant forces, emotional, scientific, and material; and there must be the slow steadfast growth

of some replacing faith, which shall retain all the elements of moral beauty that once gave life to the old belief that has disappeared, and must still possess a living force in the new.

Here we find the good side of a religious reaction such as that which Rousseau led in the last century, and of which the Savoyard Vicar's profession of faith was the famous symbol. Evil as this reaction was in many respects, and above all in the check which it gave to the application of positive methods and conceptions to the most important group of our beliefs, yet it had what was the very signal merit under the circumstances of the time, of keeping the religious emotions alive in association with a tolerant, pure, lofty, and living set of articles of faith, instead of feeding them on the dead superstitions which were at the moment the only practical alternative. The deism of Rousseau could not in any case have acquired the force of the corresponding religious reaction in England which happened to take evangelical shape, because the former never acquired a compact and vigorous external organization, as the latter did, especially in wesleyanism, the most remarkable of its developments. In truth the vague, fluid, purely subjective character of deism, disqualifies it from forming the doctrinal basis of any great objective and visible church, for it is at bottom the sublimation of individualism. But in itself it was a far less retrogressive, as well as a far less powerful, movement. It kept fewer of those dogmas which gradual change of intel-

lectual climate had reduced to the condition of rank and pestilent superstitions. It preserved some of its own, which a still further extension of the same change is assuredly destined to reduce to the same condition, but along with them it cherished sentiments which the world will never willingly let die.

Perhaps in the course of ages, when societies are far enough removed from the faith of to-day, to be able to judge it with a calm and amplitude that nobody now can pretend to, for lack of adequate length of perspective if for no other reason, it may be seen that the one cardinal service of the christian doctrine, which is of course to be distinguished from the services rendered to civilisation in early times by the christian church, has been the contribution to the active intelligence of the west, of those moods of holiness, awe, reverence, and silent worship of an unseen not made with hands, which the christianizing Jews first brought from the east. Of the fabric which four centuries ago looked so stupendous and so enduring, with its magnificent whole and its minutely reticulated parts of belief and practice, this fundamental work, this gradual creation of a new temperament in the religious imagination of western Europe and the countries that take their mental direction from her, is the only portion that will remain distinctly visible, after all the rest has sunk into the repose of histories of opinion. Whether this be the case or not, the fact that these deeper moods are among the richest acquisitions of human nature, will not be denied either by those who

think that christianity associates them with objects destined permanently to awake them in their loftiest form, or by others who believe that these objects will slowly lose their hold, and that the deepest moods of which man is capable, must ultimately ally themselves with something still more purely spiritual than the anthropomorphized deities of the falling church. And if so, then Rousseau's deism, while intercepting the steady advance of the rationalistic assault, and diverting the current of renovating energy, still did something to keep alive, in a more or less worthy shape, those parts of the slowly expiring monotheism which men have the best reasons for cherishing.

Let us endeavour to characterise Rousseau's deism with as much precision as it allows. It was a special and graceful form of a doctrine which, though susceptible alike in theory and in the practical history of religious thought of numberless wide varieties of significance, is commonly designated by the name of deism, without qualification. People constantly speak as if deism only came in with the eighteenth century. It would be impossible to name any century since the twelfth, in which distinct and abundant traces could not be found within the dominion of christianity of a belief in a supernatural power apart from the supposed disclosure of it in a special revelation.[1] A præter-christian deism, or the principle of natural religion,

[1] See Hallam's *Literature of Europe*, Pt. I. ch. ii. § 64. Again (for the 16th century), Pt. II. ch. ii. § 53. See also for mention of a sect of deists at Lyons about 1560, Bayle's Dictionary, s. v. Viret.

was inevitably contained in the legal conception of a natural law, for how can we dissociate the idea of law from the idea of a definite lawgiver? The very scholastic disputations themselves, by the sharpness and subtlety which they gave to the reasoning faculty, set men in search of novelties, and these novelties were not always of a kind which orthodox views of the christian mysteries could have sanctioned. It has been said that religion is at the cradle of every nation, and philosophy at its grave; it is at least true that the cradle of philosophy is the open grave of religion. Wherever there is argumentation, there is sure to be scepticism. When people begin to reason, a shadow has already fallen across faith, though the reasoners might have shrunk with horror from knowledge of the goal of their work, and though centuries may elapse before the shadow deepens into eclipse. But the church was strong and alert in the times when free thought vainly tried to rear a dangerous head in Italy. With the protestant revolution came slowly a wider freedom, while the prolonged and tempestuous discussion between the old church and the reformed bodies, as well as the manifold variations among those bodies at strife with one another, stimulated the growth of religious thought in many directions that tended away from the exclusive pretensions of christianity to be the oracle of the divine spirit. The same feeling which thrust aside the sacerdotal interposition between the soul of man and its sovereign creator and inspirer, gradually worked towards the dethronement of me-

diators other than sacerdotal, in whom the moral timidity of a dark and stricken age had once sought shade from the too dazzling brightness of the all-powerful and the everlasting. The assertion of the rights and powers of the individual reason within the limits of the sacred documents, began in less than a hundred years to grow into an assertion of the same rights and powers beyond those limits, and the rejection of tradition as a substitute for independent judgment, in interpreting or supplementing the records of revelation, gradually impaired the traditional authority of the records themselves, and of the central doctrines which all churches had in one shape or another agreed to accept. The Trinitarian controversy of the sixteenth century must have been a stealthy solvent. The deism of England in the eighteenth century, also, which Voltaire was the prime agent in introducing in its negative, colourless, and essentially futile shape into his own country, had its main effect as a process of dissolution.

All this, however, down to the deistical movement which Rousseau found in progress at Geneva in 1754,[1] was distinctly the outcome in a more or less marked way of a rationalising and philosophic spirit, and not of the religious spirit; and the sceptical side of it with reference to revealed religion, predominated over the positive side of it with reference to natural religion. The wild pantheism of which there were one or two extraordinary outbursts during the latter

[1] See above, vol. i. pp. 230—3.

part of the middle ages, to mark the mystical influence which Platonic studies uncorrected by science always exert over certain temperaments, had been full of religiosity, such as it was; but these had all passed away with a swift flash. There were, indeed, mystics like the author of the immortal *De Imitatione*, in whom the special qualities of christian doctrine seem to have grown pale in a brighter flood of devout aspiration towards the perfections of a single being. But this was not the deism with which either christianity on the one side, or atheism on the other, had ever had to deal in France. Deism, in its formal acceptation, was either an idle piece of vaporous sentimentality, as with such persons as madame d'Epinay, or else it was the first intellectual halting-place for spirits who had travelled out of the pale of the old dogmatic christianity, and lacked strength for the continuance of their onward journey. In the latter case, it was only another name either for the shrewd rough conviction of the man of the world, that his universe could not well be imagined to go on without a sort of constitutional monarch, reigning but not governing, keeping evil-doers in order by fear of eternal punishment, and lending a sacred countenance to the indispensable doctrines of property, the gradation of rank and station, and the other moral foundations of the social structure; or else it was a name for a purely philosophic principle, not embraced with fervour as the basis of a religion, but accepted with decorous satisfaction as the alternative to a religion;

not seized upon as the mainspring of spiritual life, but held up as a shield in a controversy.

The deism which the Savoyard Vicar explained to Emilius in his profession of faith, was pitched in a very different tone from this. Though his conception of the deity was lightly fenced round with rationalistic supports of the usual kind, drawn from the evidences of will and intelligence in the vast machinery of the universe of which we are a part, yet it was essentially the product not of reason, but of emotional expansion, as every fundamental article of a faith that touches the hearts of many men must always be. The Savoyard Vicar did not believe that a god had made the great world, and rules it with majestic power and supreme justice, in the same way in which he believed that any two sides of a triangle are greater than the third side. That there is a mysterious being penetrating all creation with force, was not a proposition to be demonstrated, but the poor description in words of an habitual mood going far deeper into life than words can ever carry us. Without for a single moment falling off into the wordy nullities of pantheism, he did not either for a single moment suffer his thought to stiffen and grow hard in the formal lines of a theological definition or a systematic credo. It remains firm enough to give the religious imagination consistency and a centre, yet luminous enough to give the spiritual faculty a vivifying consciousness of freedom and space. A creed is concerned with a number of affirmations, and is con-

stantly held with honest strenuousness, by multitudes of men and women who are unfitted by natural temperament for knowing what the glow of religious emotion means to the human soul,—for not every one that saith, Lord, lord, enters the kingdom of heaven. The Savoyard Vicar's profession of faith was not a creed, and so has few affirmations; it was a single doctrine, melted in a glow of contemplative transport. It is impossible to set about disproving it, for its exponent repeatedly warns his disciple against the idleness of logomachy, and insists that the existence of the divinity is traced upon every heart in letters that cannot be effaced, if we are only content to read them with lowliness and simplicity. You cannot demonstrate an emotion, nor prove an aspiration. How reason, asks the Savoyard Vicar, about that which we cannot conceive? Conscience is the best of all casuists, and conscience affirms the presence of a being who moves the universe and ordains all things, to whom we give the name of god.

'To this name I join the ideas of intelligence, power, will, which I have united in one, and that of goodness, which is a necessary consequence flowing from them. But I do not know any the better for this the being to whom I have given the name; he escapes equally from my senses and my understanding; the more I think of him, the more I confound myself. I have full assurance that he exists, and that he exists by himself. I recognise my own being as subordinate to his, and all the things that are known

to me as being absolutely in the same case. I perceive god everywhere in his works; I feel him in myself; I see him universally around me. But when I fain would seek where he is, what he is, of what substance, he glides away from me, and my troubled soul discerns nothing.'[1]

'Has he created matter, bodies, spirits, the world? I cannot tell. The idea of creation is beyond my apprehension, but I know that he has formed the universe and all that exists, that he has made all, ordered all. God is eternal, no doubt; but can my mind embrace the idea of eternity? Why cheat myself with words that bring no idea? What I conceive is that he is before things, that he will be as long as they subsist, and that even after them he would be, if all were one day to come to an end. God is intelligent, but how? Man is intelligent when he reasons, and the supreme intelligence has no need to reason; for this there are neither premisses nor conclusions, there is not even proposition; it is purely intuitive; all truths are no more for it than a single idea, as all places are no more than a single point, and all times no more than a single moment. God is good; what can be plainer? But goodness in man is love of his fellows, and the goodness of god is the love of order. God is just; but the justice of man is to render to each what belongs to him, and the justice of god to demand an account from each of what he has given to him.'

[1] *Emile*, IV. 163.

'In fine, the more earnestly I strive to contemplate his infinite essence, the less do I conceive it. But it is, and that suffices me. The less I conceive it, the more I adore. I bow myself down, and say to him, O being of beings, I am because thou art; to meditate ceaselessly on thee by day and night, is to raise myself to my veritable source and fount. The worthiest use of my reason is to make itself as naught before thee. It is the ravishment of my soul, it is the solace of my weakness, to feel myself brought low before the awful majesty of thy greatness.'[1]

Souls weary of the fierce mockeries that had so long been flying like fiery shafts against the far Jehovah of the Hebrews, and the silent Christ of the later doctors and dignitaries, and weary too of the orthodox demonstrations which did not demonstrate, and leaden refutations which could not refute, may well have turned with ardour to listen to this harmonious spiritual voice, sounding clear from a region towards which their hearts yearned with untold aspiration, but which the spirit of their time had shut off from them with brazen barriers. It was the elevation and expansion of man, as much as it was the restoration of a divinity. To realise this, one must turn to such a book as Helvétius's, which was supposed to reveal the whole inner machinery of the heart, and which did reveal a great deal of it with scientific skill, but was miserably inadequate in its conception of the forces which were to give it motion. Man was

[1] *Emile*, IV. 183—5.

thought of as a singular piece of mechanism principally moved from without, not as a conscious organism, receiving nourishment and direction from the medium in which it is placed, but reacting with a life of its own from within. It was this free and energetic inner life of the individual, which the Savoyard Vicar restored to lawful recognition, and made once more the centre of that imaginative and spiritual existence, without which we live in a universe that has no sun by day nor any stars by night. A writer in whom learning has not extinguished enthusiasm, compares this to the advance made by Descartes, who had in like manner given certitude to the soul by turning thought confidently inwards upon itself, and he declares that this is for the emancipation of sentiment, what the Discourse upon Method was for the emancipation of the understanding.[1] There is here a certain audacity of panegyric; still the fact that Rousseau chose to link the highest forms of man's ideal life with a fading projection of the lofty image which had been set up in older days, ought not to blind us to the excellent energies which, notwithstanding defect of association, such a vindication of the ideal was certain to quicken. And at least the lines of that high image were nobly traced.

Yet who does not feel that it is a divinity for fair weather? Rousseau with his fine sense of a proper and artistic setting, imagined the Savoyard Vicar as

[1] M. Henri Martin's *Hist. de France*, xvi. 101, where there is an interesting, but, as it seems to the present writer, hardly a successful attempt to bring the Savoyard Vicar's eloquence into scientific form.

leading his youthful convert at break of a summer day to the top of a high hill, at whose feet the Po flowed between fertile banks; in the distance the immense chain of the Alps crowned the landscape; the rays of the rising sun projected long level shadows from the trees, the slopes, the houses, and accented with a thousand lines of light the most magnificent of panoramas.[1] This was the fitting suggestion, so serene, warm, pregnant with power and hope, and half mysterious, of the idea of godhead which the man of peace, after an interval of silent contemplation, proceeded to expound. This idea is a finer conception, and of greater moral potency, than that of a grim chief justice of the universe, which criminal lawyers and others are trying to deck with the right official robes and to seat on the bench in our day; or than that of a blood-smeared monster, as from some steaming shrine in old Mexico, which De Maistre called providence; or than that which asks us to bow down and worship god as 'a stream of tendency.' Rousseau's sentimental idea at least did not revolt moral sense; it did not afflict the firmness of intelligence; nor did it silence the diviner melodies of the soul beneath loudly diligent blows on the great Benthamite drum. It recognised, contained, and partially satisfied the religious emotion, which these others either fail to do at all, or else do in a far unworthier manner. Yet, once more, the heavens in which such a deity dwells are too high, his power is

[1] *Emile*, IV. 135.

too impalpable, the mysterious air which he has poured around his being is too awful and impenetrable, for the rays from the sun of his majesty to reach more than a few contemplative spirits, and these only in their hours of tranquillity and expansion. The thought is too vague, too far, to bring comfort and refreshment to the mass of travailing men, or to invest duty with the stern ennobling quality of being done, 'if I have grace to use it so, As ever in my great taskmaster's eye.'

The Savoyard Vicar was consistent with the sublimity of his own conception. He meditated on the order of the universe, with a reverence too profound to allow him to mingle with his thoughts meaner desires as to the special relations of that order to himself. 'I penetrate all my faculties,' he said, 'with the divine essence of the author of the world; I melt at the thought of his goodness, and bless all his gifts, but I do not pray to him. What should I ask of him? That for me he should change the course of things, and in my favour work miracles? Could I, who must love above all else the order established by his wisdom and upheld by his providence, presume to wish such order troubled for my sake? Nor do I ask of him the power of doing righteousness; why ask for what he has given me? Has he not bestowed on me conscience to love what is good, reason to ascertain it, freedom to choose it? If I do ill, I have no excuse; I do it because I will it. To pray to him to change my will, is to seek from him what he seeks from me;

it is to wish no longer to be human, it is to wish something other than what is, it is to wish disorder and evil.'[1] We may admire both the logical consistency of such self-denial, and the manliness which it would engender in the character that were strong enough to practise it, but a divinity who has conceded no right of petition is still further away from our lives than the divinities of more popular creeds.

Even the fairest deism is of its essence a faith of egoism and complacency. It does not incorporate in the very heart of the religious emotion the pitifulness and sorrow which christianity first clothed with associations of sanctity, and which can never henceforth miss their place in any religious system to be accepted by men, because a religion that leaves them out, or thrusts them into a hidden corner, fails to comprehend at least one half, and that the most touching and impressive half, of the most conspicuous facts of human life. Rousseau was fuller of the capacity of pity than ordinary men, and this pity was one of the deepest parts of himself; yet it did not enter into the composition of his religious faith, and this shows that his religious faith, though entirely free from suspicion of insincerity or ostentatious assumption, was like all deism, whether rationalistic or emotional, a kind of gratuitously adopted superfluity, not the satisfaction of a profound inner craving and resistless spiritual necessity. He speaks of the good and the wicked with the precision and assurance of the most

[1] *Emile*, IV. 204.

pharisaic theologian, and he begins by asking of what concern it is to him whether the wicked are punished with eternal torment or not, though he concludes more graciously with the hope that in another state the wicked, delivered from their malignity, may enjoy a bliss no less than his own.[1] But the divine pitifulness which we owe to christianity, and which will not be the less eagerly cherished by those who repudiate christian tradition and doctrines, enjoins upon us that we should ask who are the wicked, and which is he that is without sin among us. Rousseau answered this glibly enough by some formula of metaphysics, now happily wearing swiftly out, about the human will having been left and constituted free by the creator of the world, and that man being the bad man, who abuses his freedom. Grace, fate, destiny, force of circumstances, are all so many names for the protests which the frank sense of fact in men has forced from them, against this miserably inadequate explanation of the foundations of moral responsibility.

Whatever these foundations may be, the theories of grace and fate had at any rate the quality of connecting human conduct with the will of the gods. Rousseau's deism, severing the influence of the supreme being upon man, at the very moment when it could have saved him from the guilt that brings misery, that

[1] *Emile*, IV. 181—2. In a letter to Vernes (Feb. 18, 1758. *Corr.*, ii. 9) he expresses his suspicion that possibly the souls of the wicked may be annihilated at their death, and that being and feeling may prove the first reward of a good life. In this letter he asks also, with the same magnanimous security as the Savoyard Vicar, 'of what concern the destiny of the wicked can be to him.'

is at the moment when conduct begins to follow the preponderant motives or the will, if we must call it so, did thus effectually cut off the most admirable and fertile group of our sympathies from all direct connection with religious sentiment. Toiling as manfully as we may through the wilderness of seventy years, we are to reserve our deepest adoration for the being who has left us there, with no other solace than that he is good and just and all-powerful, and might have given us comfort and guidance if he would. This was virtually the form which Pelagius had tried to impose upon christianity in the fifth century, and which the souls of men, thirsting for consciousness of an active divine presence, had then under the lead of Augustine so energetically cast away from them. The faith to which they clung, while rejecting this great heresy, though just as transcendental, still had the quality of satisfying a spiritual want, and it was even more readily to be accepted by the human intelligence, for it endowed the supreme power with the father's excellence of compassion, and presented for our reverence and gratitude and devotion a figure, who drew from men the highest love for the god whom they had not seen, along with, and by the same act as, the warmest pity and love for their brethren whom they had seen.

The Savoyard Vicar's own position to christianity was one of reverential scepticism. 'The holiness of the gospel,' he said, 'is an argument that speaks to my heart and to which I should even be sorry to find

a good answer. Look at the books of the philosophers with all their pomp; how puny they are by the side of that! Is there here the tone of an enthusiast or an ambitious sectary? What gentleness, what purity, in his manners, what touching grace in his teaching, what loftiness in his maxims! Assuredly there was something more than human in such teaching, such a character, such a life, such a death. If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a god. Shall we say that the history of the gospels is invented at pleasure? My friend, that is not the fashion of invention; and the facts about Socrates are less attested than the facts about Christ.[1] Yet with all that, this same gospel abounds in things incredible, which are repugnant to reason, and which it is impossible for any sensible man to conceive or admit. What are we to do in the midst of all these contradictions? To be ever modest and circumspect, my son; to respect in silence what one can neither reject nor understand, and to make one's self lowly before the great being who alone knows the truth.'[2]

'I regard all particular religions as so many salutary institutions, which prescribe in every country a uniform manner of honouring god by public worship. I believe them all good, so long as men serve god fit-

[1] A similar disparagement of Socrates, in comparison with the Christ of the gospels, is to be found in the long letter of Jan. 15, 1769 (*Corr.*, vi. 59—60), to M. * * *, accompanied by a violent denigration of the Jews, conformably to the philosophic prejudice of the time.

[2] *Emile*, IV. 241—2.

tingly in them. The essential worship is the worship of the heart. God never rejects this homage, under whatever form it be offered to him. In other days I used to say mass with the levity which in time infects even the gravest things, when we do them too often. Since acquiring my new principles I celebrate it with more veneration; I am overwhelmed by the majesty of the supreme being, by his presence, by the insufficiency of the human mind, which conceives so little what pertains to its author. When I approach the moment of consecration, I collect myself for performing the act with all the feelings required by the church, and the majesty of the sacrament; I strive to annihilate my reason before the supreme intelligence, saying, Who art thou, that thou shouldest measure infinite power?'[1]

A creed like this, whatever else it may be, is plainly a powerful solvent of every system of exclusive dogma. If the one essential to true worship, the worship of the heart and the inner sentiment, be mystic adoration of an indefinable supreme, then creeds based upon books, prophecies, miracles, revelations, all fall alike into the second place among things that may be lawful and may be expedient, but that can never be exacted from men by a just god as indispensable to virtue in this world or bliss in the next. No better answer has ever been given to the exclusive pretensions of sect, christian, jewish, or mahometan, than that propounded by the Savoyard Vicar with

[1] *Emile*, IV. 243.

such energy, closeness, and most sarcastic fire.[1] It was turning an unexpected front upon the presumptuousness of all varieties of theological infallibilists, to prove to them that if you insist upon acceptance of this or that special revelation, over and above the dictates of natural religion, then you are bound not only to grant, but imperatively to enjoin upon all men a searching inquiry and comparison, that they may spare no pains in an affair of such momentous issue in proving to themselves that this, and none of the competing revelations, is the veritable message of eternal safety. 'Then no other study will be possible but that of religion: hardly shall one who has enjoyed the most robust health, employed his time and used his reason to best purpose, and lived the greatest number of years, hardly shall such an one in his extreme age be quite sure what to believe, and it will be a marvel if he finds out before he dies, in what faith he ought to have lived.' The superiority of the sceptical parts of the Savoyard Vicar's profession, as well as of those of the Letters from the Mountain to which we referred previously,[2] over the biting mockeries which Voltaire had made the fashionable method of assault, lay in the fact that while the latter only revolted and irritated all serious temperaments to whom religion is a matter of honest concern, the former actually appealed to their religious sense in support of his doubts; and the more intelligent and sincere this sense happened to be, the more surely

[1] *Emile*, IV. 210—36. [2] See above, pp. 84, 100.

would Rousseau's gravely urged objections dissolve the hard particles of dogmatic belief. His objections were on a moral level with the best side of the religion they oppugned, not like Voltaire's, only on a level with its lowest side, which was the side presented by the gross and repulsive obscurantism of the functionaries of the church.

Unfortunately, Rousseau had placed in the hands of the partisans of every exclusive revelation an instrument which was quite enough to disperse all his objections to the winds, and which was the very instrument that defended his own cherished religion. If he was satisfied with replying to the atheist and the materialist, that he knew there was a supreme god, and that the soul must have here and hereafter an existence apart from the body, because he found these truths ineffaceably written upon his own heart, what could prevent the christian or the mahometan from replying to Rousseau that the New Testament or the Koran was the special and final revelation from the supreme power to his creatures? If you may appeal to the voice of the heart and the dictate of the inner sentiment in one case, why not in the other also? A subjective test necessarily proves anything that any man desires, and the accident of the article proved appearing either reasonable or monstrous to other people, cannot have the least bearing on its efficacy or conclusiveness.

The end of it all, therefore, is the final subordination, if not at one point, yet at another, of reason

and love of truth to religious imagination and devout emotion. Such an end may or may not be desirable for the long spiritual and intellectual travail of the race. We need not discuss the question, for whether desirable or undesirable, such an end is impossible. The pietist of whatever creed or temperament can no more in the long run succeed in stifling the reason in his fellow, than the materialists of the eighteenth century succeeded in quenching the lamp and silencing the harmonies of the religious sentiment. The rectitude of human intelligence, provided other conditions of general advance are not violently impeded, will ever in due season vindicate itself against the one, as the sense of awe and sublimity and of holy things beyond the reach of touch or taste, will ever make itself felt outside of the narrow demonstrations of the other. Until absolute freedom and lawful energy in the use of reason be conceded by those who claim full and unfettered expansion in the development of religious emotion, and until those who insist on searching after all forms of truth and giving them place and recognition when found, grant tolerance and respect to those who find their peace in vague and impetuous instincts of holiness, for so long we may be sure that the true base cannot be established for that nobler type of life, which an age distracted between thin ratiocination and thinner superstition may well look for, and look for in vain.

Deism like the Savoyard Vicar's, opens no path for the future, because it makes no allowance for the

growth of intellectual conviction, and binds up religion with mystery, with an object whose attributes can neither be conceived nor defined, with a being too all-embracing to be able to receive anything from us, too august, self-contained, remote, to be able to bestow on us the humble gifts of which we have need. The temperature of thought is slowly, but without an instant's recoil, rising to a point when a mystery like this, definite enough to be imposed as a faith, but too indefinite to be grasped by understanding as a truth, melts away from the emotions of religion. Then those instincts of holiness, without which the world would be to so many of its highest spirits the most dreary of exiles, will perhaps come to associate themselves not with unseen divinities, but with the long brotherhood of humanity seen and unseen. Here we shall move with an assurance that no scepticism and no advance of science can ever shake, because the benefactions which we have received from the strenuousness of human effort, can never be doubted, and each fresh acquisition in knowledge or goodness can only kindle new fervour. Those who have the religious imagination struck by the awful procession of man from the region of impenetrable night, by his incessant struggle with the hardness of the material world, and his sublimer struggle with the hard world of his own egoistic passions, by the pain and sacrifice by which generation after generation has added some small piece to the temple of human freedom, or some new fragment to the ever incomplete sum of human

knowledge, or some fresh line to the types of strong or beautiful character,—those who have an eye for all this, may indeed have no ecstasy and no terror, no heaven nor hell, in their religion, but they will have abundant moods of reverence, deep-seated gratitude, and sovereign pitifulness.

And such moods will not end in sterile exaltation, or the deathly chills of spiritual reaction. They will bring forth abundant fruit in new hope and invigorated endeavour. This devout contemplation of the experience of the race, instead of raising a man into the clouds, brings him into the closest, loftiest, and most conscious relations with his kind, to whom he owes all that is of value in his own life, and to whom he can repay his debt by maintaining the beneficent tradition of service, by cherishing honour for all the true and sage spirits that have shone upon the earth, and sorrow and reprobation for all the unworthier souls whose light has gone out in baseness. A man with this faith can have no foul spiritual pride, for there is no mysteriously accorded divine grace in which one may be a larger participant than another; he can have no incentives to that mutilation with which every branch of the church, from the oldest to the youngest and crudest, has in its degree afflicted and retarded mankind, because the key-note of his religion is the joyful energy of every faculty, practical, reflective, creative, contemplative, in pursuit of a visible common good; and he can be plunged into no fatal and paralysing despair by any doctrine of mortal sin, because active

faith in humanity, resting on recorded experience, discloses the many possibilities of moral recovery, and the work that may be done for men in the fragment of days, redeeming the contrite from their burdens by manful hope. If religion is our feeling about the highest forces that govern human destiny, then as it becomes more and more evident how much our destiny is shaped by the generation of the dead who have prepared the present, and by the purport of our hopes and the direction of our activity for the generations that are to fill the future, the religious sentiment will more and more attach itself to the great unseen host of our fellows who have gone before us and who are to come after. Such a faith is no rag of metaphysic floating in the sunshine of sentimentalism, like Rousseau's. It rests on a positive base, which only becomes wider and firmer with the widening of experience and the augmentation of our skill in interpreting it. Nor is it too transcendent for practical acceptance. One of the most scientific spirits of the eighteenth century, while each moment expecting the knock of the executioner at his door, found as religious a solace as any early martyr had ever found in his barbarous mysteries, when he linked his own efforts for reason and freedom with the eternal chain of the destinies of man. 'This contemplation,' he wrote and felt, 'is for him a refuge into which the rancour of his persecutors can never follow him; in which, living in thought with man reinstated in the rights and the dignity of his nature, he forgets man tormented and

corrupted by greed, by base fear, by envy; it is here that he truly abides with his fellows, in an elysium that his reason has known how to create for itself, and that his love for humanity adorns with all purest delights.'[1]

This, to the shame of those wavering souls who despair of progress at the first moment when it threatens to leave the path they have marked out for it, was written by a man at the very close of his days, when every hope that he had ever cherished, seemed to one without the eye of faith to be extinguished in bloodshed, disorder, and barbarism. But there is a still happier season in the adolescence of generous natures that have been wisely fostered, when the horizons of the dawning life are suddenly lighted up with a glow of aspiration towards good and holy things. Commonly, alas, this priceless opportunity is lost in a fit of theological exaltation, which is gradually choked out by the dusty facts of life and moulders away into dry indifference. It would not be so, but far different, if the Savoyard Vicar instead of taking the youth to the mountain top, there to contemplate that infinite unseen, which is in truth beyond contemplation by the limited faculties of man, were to associate those fine impulses of the early prime with the visible, intelligible, and still sublime possibilities of the human destiny, that imperial conception, which alone can shape an existence of entire proportion in all its parts, and leave no natural

[1] Condorcet's *Progrès de l'esprit humain* (1794)—*Œuv.*, vi. 276.

energy of life idle or athirst. Do you ask for sanctions? One whose conscience has been strengthened from youth in this faith, can know no greater bitterness than the stain cast by wrong act or unworthy thought on the high memories with which he has been used to walk, and the discord wrought in the hopes which have become the ruling harmony of his days.

CHAPTER XV.

ENGLAND.[1]

THERE is in an English collection a portrait of Jean Jacques, which was painted during his residence in this country by a provincial artist, and which, singular and displeasing as it is, yet lights up for us many a word and passage in Rousseau's life here and elsewhere, which the ordinary engravings and the trim self-complacency of the statue on the little island at Geneva, would leave very incomprehensible. It is almost as appalling in its realism as some of the dark pits that open before the reader of the Confessions. Hard struggles with objective difficulty and external obstacle wear deep furrows in the brow, and throw into the glance a solicitude, half penetrating and defiant, half dejected. When a man's hindrances have sprung up from within, and the ill-fought battle of his days has been with his own passions and morbid broodings and unchastened dreams, the eye and the facial lines that stamp character tell the story of that profound moral defeat, which is unlighted by the memories of resolute combat with evil and weakness,

[1] Jan. 1766—May, 1767.

and leaves only eternal desolation, and the misery that is formless. Our English artist has produced a vision from that prose Inferno which is made so populous in the modern epoch by impotence of will, and those who have seen the picture, may easily understand how largely the character of the original, at the time when it was painted, must have been pregnant with harassing confusion and distress.

Four years before this, Hume, to whom lord Marischal had told the story of Rousseau's persecutions, had proffered his services, and declared his eagerness to help in finding a proper refuge for him in England. There had been an exchange of cordial letters,[1] and then the matter had lain quiet, until the impossibility of remaining longer in Neuchâtel had once more set his friends on procuring a safe establishment for their rather difficult refugee. Rousseau's appearance in Paris had created the keenest excitement. 'People may talk of ancient Greece as they please,' wrote Hume from Paris, 'but no nation was ever so proud of genius as this, and no person ever so much engaged their attention as Rousseau; Voltaire and everybody else are quite eclipsed by him.' Even his maid, Le Vasseur, who was declared very homely and very awkward, was more talked of than the princess of Morocco or the countess of Egmont, on account of her fidelity towards him. His very dog had a name and reputation in the world.[2] Rousseau is always said to have liked the stir which his presence created, but

[1] Streckeisen, ii. 275, etc. *Corr.*, iii.

[2] Burton, ii. 299.

whether this was so or not, he was very impatient to be away from it as soon as possible.

In company with Hume, he left Paris in the second week of January, 1766. They crossed from Calais to Dover by night, in a passage that lasted twelve hours, Hume, as the orthodox may be glad to know, being extremely ill, while Rousseau cheerfully passed the whole night upon deck, taking no harm, though the seamen were almost frozen to death.[1] They reached London on the thirteenth of January, and the people of London showed nearly as lively an interest in the strange personage whom Hume had brought among them, as the people of Paris had done. A prince of the blood at once went to pay his respects to the Swiss philosopher. The crowd at the playhouse showed more curiosity when the stranger came in, than when the king and queen entered. Their majesties were as interested as their subjects, and could scarcely keep

[1] The materials for this chapter are taken from Rousseau's *Correspondence*, (Vols. iv. and v.,) and from Hume's letters to various persons, given in the second volume of Mr. Burton's *Life of Hume*. Everybody who takes an interest in Rousseau is indebted to Mr. Burton for the ample documents which he has provided, though one cannot but regret the satire on Rousseau with which he intersperses them, and which is not always felicitous. For one instance, he implies (p. 295) that Rousseau invented the story given in the Confessions, of Hume's correcting the proofs of Wallace's book against himself. The story may be true or not, but at any rate Rousseau had it very circumstantially from lord Marischal; see letter from lord M. to J. J. R., in Streckeisen, ii. 67. Again, such an expression as Rousseau's '*occasional* attention to small matters' (p. 321) only shows that the writer has not read R.'s letters, which are indeed not worth reading, except by those who wish to have a right to speak about Rousseau's character. The numerous pamphlets on the quarrel between Hume and Rousseau, if I may judge from those of them which I have turned over, really shed no light on the matter, though they added much heat, now long extinct in most bosoms. For the journey see *Corr.*, iv. 307; Burton, 304.

their eyes off the author of Emilius. George III., then in the heyday of his youth, was so pleased to have a foreigner of genius seeking shelter in his kingdom, that he readily acceded to Conway's suggestion, prompted by Hume, that Rousseau should have a pension settled on him. The ever illustrious Burke, then just made member of Parliament, saw him nearly every day, and became persuaded that 'he entertained no principle either to influence his heart, or guide his understanding, but vanity.'[1] Hume, on the contrary, thought the best things of his client; 'He has an excellent warm heart, and in conversation kindles often to a degree of heat which looks like inspiration: I love him much, and hope that I have some share in his affections.' 'He is a very modest, mild, well-bred, gentle-spirited and warm-hearted man, as ever I knew in my life. He is also to appearance very sociable. I never saw a man who seems better calculated for good company, nor who seems to take more pleasure in it.' 'He is a very agreeable, amiable man; but a great humourist. The philosophers of Paris foretold to me that I could not conduct him to Calais without a quarrel; but I think I could live with him all my life in mutual friendship and esteem. I believe one great source of our concord is that neither he nor I are disputatious, which is not the case with any of them. They are also displeased with him, because they think he overabounds in religion; and it is indeed remarkable that

[1] *Reflections on the French Revolution.*

the philosopher of this age who has been most persecuted, is by far the most devout.'[1]

What the Scotch philosopher meant by calling his pupil a humourist, may perhaps be inferred from the story of the trouble he had in prevailing upon Rousseau to go to the play, though Garrick had appointed a special occasion and set apart a special box for him. When the hour came, Rousseau declared that he could not leave his dog behind him. 'The first person,' he said, 'who opens the door, Sultan will run into the streets in search of me, and will be lost.' Hume told him to lock Sultan up in the room, and carry away the key in his pocket. This was done, but as they proceeded downstairs, the dog began to howl; his master turned back, and avowed he had not resolution to leave him in that condition. Hume, however, caught him in his arms, told him that Mr. Garrick had dismissed another company in order to make room for him, that the king and queen were expecting to see him, and that without a better reason than Sultan's impatience it would be ridiculous to disappoint them. Thus, a little by reason, but more by force, he was carried off.[2] Such a story, whatever else we may think of it, shows at least a certain curious and not untouching simplicity. And singularity which made Rousseau like better to keep his dog company at home, than to be stared at by a stupid king and a gaping pit, was too private in its reward to be the result of that vanity and affectation with

[1] Burton, 304, 309, 310.

[2] Burton, 309, *n.*

which he was taxed by men who lived in another sphere of motive.

There was considerable trouble in settling Rousseau. He was eager to leave London almost as soon as he arrived in it. Though pleased with the friendly reception which had been given him, he pronounced London to be as much devoted to idle gossip and frivolity as other capitals. He spent a few weeks in the house of a farmer at Chiswick, thought about fixing himself in the Isle of Wight, then in Wales, then somewhere in our fair Surrey, whose scenery, one is glad to know, greatly attracted him. Finally arrangements were made by Hume with Mr. Davenport for installing him in a house belonging to the latter, at Wootton, near Ashbourne in the Peak of Derbyshire.[1] Hither Rousseau proceeded with Theresa, at the end of March. Mr. Davenport was a gentleman of large property,[2] and as he seldom inhabited this solitary house, was very willing that Rousseau should take up his abode there without payment. This, however, was what Rousseau's independence could not brook, and he insisted that his entertainer should receive thirty pounds a year for the board of himself and Theresa.[3] So here he settled,

[1] Mr. Howitt has given an account of Rousseau's quarters at Wootton in his *Visits to Remarkable Places*. One or two aged peasants had some confused memory of 'old Ross-hall.' For Rousseau's own description, see his letter to mdme. de Luze, May 10, 1766. *Corr.*, iv. 326.

[2] His lineal descendant in our day is a well-known member of the House of Commons.

[3] Burton, 313. It has been stated that Rousseau never paid this; at any rate when he fled, he left between thirty and forty pounds in Mr. Davenport's

in an extremely bitter climate, knowing no word of the language of the people about him, with no companionship but Theresa's, and with nothing to do but walk when the weather was fair, play the harpsichord when it rained, and brood over the incidents which had occurred to him since he had left Switzerland six months before. The first fruits of this unfortunate leisure were a bitter quarrel with Hume, one of the most famous and far resounding of all the quarrels of illustrious men, but one about which very little need now be said, so plain are the merits of it, and so entirely dead is all the significance that may ever have belonged to it. The incubation of his grievances began immediately after his arrival at Wootton,[1] but two months elapsed before they burst forth in full flame.

The general charge against Hume was that he was a member of an accursed triumvirate, of which Voltaire and d'Alembert were the other partners, and the object of which was to blacken the character of Rousseau, and make his life miserable. The particular acts on which this belief was established were the following.

1. While Rousseau was in Paris, there appeared a letter nominally addressed to him by the king of Prussia, and written in an ironical strain, which persuaded Jean Jacques himself that it was the work of

hands. See Davenport to Hume; Burton, 367. Rousseau's accurate probity in affairs of money is absolutely unimpeachable.

[1] *Corr.*, iv. 312, April 9, 1766.

Voltaire.[1] Then he suspected D'Alembert. It was really the composition of Horace Walpole, who was then in Paris. Now Hume was the friend of Walpole, and had given Rousseau a card of introduction to him, for the purpose of entrusting Walpole with the carriage of some papers. Although the false letter produced the liveliest amusement at Rousseau's cost, first in Paris, then in London, Hume while feigning to be his warm friend and presenting him to the English public, never took any pains to tell the world that the piece was a forgery, nor did he break with its wicked author.[2]

2. When Rousseau assured Hume that D'Alembert was a cunning and dishonourable man, Hume denied it with an amazing heat, though he knew the latter to be Rousseau's enemy.[3] 3. Hume lived in London with the son of Tronchin, the Genevese surgeon, and the most mortal of all the foes of Jean Jacques.[4]

[1] Here is a translation of this rather poor piece of sarcasm :—'My dear Jean Jacques,—You have renounced Geneva, your native place. You have caused your expulsion from Switzerland, a country so extolled in your writings ; France has issued a warrant against you ; so do you come to me. I admire your talents ; I am amused by your dreamings, though let me tell you they absorb you too much and for too long. You must at length be sober and happy ; you have caused enough talk about yourself by oddities which in truth are hardly becoming a really great man. Prove to your enemies that you can now and then have common sense. That will annoy them and do you no harm. My states offer you a peaceful retreat. I wish you well, and will treat you well, if you will let me. But if you persist in refusing my help, do not reckon upon my telling any one that you did so. If you are bent on tormenting your spirit to find new misfortunes, choose whatever you like best. I am a king, and can procure them for you at your pleasure ; and what will certainly never happen to you in respect of your enemies, I will cease to persecute you, as soon as you cease to take a pride in being persecuted. Your good friend, FREDERICK.'

[2] *Corr.*, iv. 313, 343, 388, 398. [3] Ib., 395. [4] Ib., 389, etc.

4. When Rousseau first came to London, his reception was a distinguished triumph for the victim of persecution from so many governments. England was proud of being his place of refuge, and justly vaunted the freedom of her laws and administration. Suddenly and for no assignable cause, the public tone changed, the newspapers either fell silent or else spoke unfavourably, and Rousseau was thought of no more. This must have been due to Hume, who had much influence among people of credit, and who went about boasting of the protection which he had procured for Jean Jacques in Paris.[1] 5. Various small artifices for preventing Rousseau from making friends, for procuring opportunities of opening Rousseau's letters, and the like.[2] 6. A violent satirical letter against Rousseau appeared in the English newspapers, with allusions which could only have been supplied by Hume. 7. On the first night after their departure from Paris, Rousseau, who occupied the same room with Hume, heard him call out several times in the middle of the night in the course of his dreams, with extreme vehemence, *Je tiens Jean Jacques Rousseau*,—which words, in spite of the horribly sardonic tone of the dreamer, he interpreted favourably at the time, but which later events proved to have been full of malign significance.[3] 8. Rousseau constantly found Hume eyeing him with a glance of sinister and diabolic import that filled him with an astonishing disquietude, though he did his best to combat it. On one of these

[1] Ib., 384. [2] Ib., 343, 344, 387, etc. [3] Ib., 346.

occasions he was seized with remorse, fell upon Hume's neck, embraced him warmly, and, suffocated with sobs and bathed in tears, cried out in broken accent, *No, no, David Hume is no traitor*, with many protests of affection; but the phlegmatic Hume only returned his embrace with politeness, stroked him gently on the back, and repeated several times in a tranquil voice, *Quoi, mon cher monsieur! Eh! mon cher monsieur! Quoi donc, mon cher monsieur.*[1] 9. Although for many weeks Rousseau had kept a firm silence to Hume, neglecting to answer letters that plainly called for answer, and marking his displeasure in other unmistakable ways, yet Hume had never sought any explanation of what must necessarily have struck him as so singular, but continued to write as if nothing had happened. Was not this positive proof of a consciousness of perfidy?

Some years afterwards he substituted another shorter set of grievances, namely that Hume would not suffer Theresa to sit at table with him; that he made a show of him; and that Hume had an engraving executed of himself, which made him as beautiful as a cherub, while in another engraving, which was a pendant to his own, Jean Jacques was made as ugly as a bear.[2]

[1] Ib., 390. A letter from Hume to Blair, long before the rupture overt, shows the former to have been by no means so phlegmatic on this occasion as he may have seemed. 'I hope,' he writes, 'you have not so bad an opinion of me as to think I was not melted on this occasion; I assure you I kissed him and embraced him twenty times, with a plentiful effusion of tears. I think no scene of my life was ever more affecting.'—Burton, ii. 315. The great doubters of the eighteenth century could without fear have accepted the test of the ancient saying, that men without tears are worth little.

[2] Bernardin de St. Pierre, *Œuv.*, xii. 79.

It would be ridiculous for us to waste any time in discussing these charges. They are not open to serious examination, though it is astonishing to find writers in our own day who fully believe that Hume was a traitor, and behaved extremely basely to the unfortunate man whom he had inveigled over to a barbarous island. The only part of the indictment about which there could be the least doubt, was the possibility of Hume having been an accomplice in Walpole's very small pleasantry. Some of his friends in Paris suspected that he had had a hand in the supposed letter from the king of Prussia. Although the letter constituted no very malignant jest, and could not by a sensible man have been regarded as furnishing just complaint against one who, like Walpole, was merely an impudent stranger, yet if it could be shown that Hume had taken an active part either in the composition or the circulation of a spiteful bit of satire upon one towards whom he was pretending a singular affection, then we should admit that he showed such a want of sense of the delicacy of friendship, as amounted to something like treachery. But a letter from Walpole to Hume sets this doubt at rest. 'I cannot be precise as to the time of my writing the king of Prussia's letter, but . . . . . I not only suppressed the letter while you stayed there, out of delicacy to you, but it was the reason why, out of delicacy to myself, I did not go to see him as you often proposed to me, thinking it wrong to go and make a cordial

visit to a man, with a letter in my pocket to laugh at him.'[1]

With this all else falls to the ground. It would be as unwise in us, as it was in Rousseau himself, to complicate the hypotheses. Men do not act without motives, and Hume could have no motive in entering into any plot against Rousseau, even if the rival philosophers in France might have motives. We know the character of our David Hume perfectly well, and though it was not faultless, its fault certainly lay rather in an excessive desire to make the world comfortable for everybody, than in anything like purposeless malignity, of which he never had a trace. Moreover, all that befel Rousseau through Hume's agency was exceedingly to his advantage. Hume was not without vanity, and his letters show that he was not displeased at the addition to his consequence, which came of his patronage of a man who was much talked about and much stared at. But, however this was, he did all for Rousseau that generosity and thoughtfulness could do. He was at great pains in establishing him; he used his interest to procure for him the grant of a pension from the king; when Rousseau provisionally refused the pension rather than owe anything to Hume, the latter, still ignorant of the suspicion that was blackening in

[1] Walpole's *Letters*, v. 7 (Cunningham's edition). For other letters from this shrewd insufferable coxcomb on the same matter, see pp. 23—8. A corroboration of the statement that Hume knew nothing of the letter until he was in England, may be inferred from what he wrote to madame de Boufflers; Burton, ii. 306, and *n.* 2.

Rousseau's mind, supposed that the refusal came from the fact of the pension being kept private, and at once took measures with the minister to procure the removal of the condition of privacy. Besides undeniable acts like these, the state of Hume's mind towards his curious ward is abundantly shown in his letters to all his most intimate friends, just as Rousseau's gratitude to him is to be read in all his early letters both to Hume and other persons. In the presence of such facts on the one side, and in the absence of any particle of intelligible evidence to neutralise them on the other, to treat Rousseau's charges with gravity is hardly possible.

If Hume had written back in a mild and conciliatory strain, there can be no doubt that the unfortunate victim of his own morbid imagination would, for a time at any rate, have been sobered and brought to a sense of his misconduct. Hume, however, was incensed beyond control at what he very pardonably took for a masterpiece of atrocious ingratitude. He reproached Rousseau in terms as harsh as those which Grimm had used nine years before. He wrote to all his friends, withdrawing the kindly words he had once used of Rousseau's character, and substituting in their place the most unfavourable he could find. He gave the philosophic circle in Paris exquisite delight by the confirmation which his story furnished of their own foresight, when they had warned him that he was taking a viper to his bosom. Finally, in spite of the advice of Adam Smith, of one of the greatest of men, Turgot, and of one of the

smallest, Horace Walpole, he published a succinct account of the quarrel, first in French, and then in English. This step was chiefly due to the advice of the clique of whom D'Alembert was the spokesman, though it is due to him to mention that he softened various expressions in Hume's narrative, which he pronounced too harsh. It may be true that a council of war never fights; a council of men of letters always does. The governing committee of a literary, philosophical, or theological clique, form the very worst advisers any man can have.

Much must be forgiven to Hume, stung as he was by what appeared the most hateful ferocity in one on whom he had heaped acts of affection. Yet one would have been glad on behalf of human dignity, if he had suffered with firm silence petulant charges against which the consciousness of his own uprightness should have been the only answer. That high pride, of which there is too little rather than too much in the world, and which saves men from waste of themselves and others in pitiful accusations, vindications, retaliations, would have helped humane pity in preserving him from this poor quarrel. Long afterwards Rousseau said, 'England, of which they paint such fine pictures in France, has so cheerless a climate; my soul, wearied with so many shocks, was in a condition of such profound melancholy, that in all that passed I believe I committed many faults. But are they comparable to those of the enemies who persecuted me, supposing them even to have done no

more than published our private quarrels?'[1] An ampler contrition would have been more seemly in the first offender, but there is a measure of justice in his complaint. We need not, however, reproach the good Hume. Before six months were over, he admits that he is sometimes inclined to blame his publication, and always to regret it.[2] And his regret was not verbal merely. When Rousseau had returned to France, and was in danger of arrest, Hume was most urgent in entreating Turgot to use his influence with the government to protect the wretched wanderer, and Turgot's answer shows both how sincere this humane interposition was, and how practically serviceable.[3]

Meanwhile there ensued a horrible fray in print. Pamphlets appeared in Paris and London in a cloud. The Succinct Exposure was followed by succinct rejoinders. Walpole officiously printed his own account of his own share in the matter. Boswell officiously wrote to the newspapers defending Rousseau and attacking Walpole. King George followed the battle with intense curiosity. Hume with solemn formalities sent the documents to the British Museum. There was silence only in one place, and that was at Wootton. The unfortunate person who had done all the mischief, printed not a word.

The most prompt and quite the least instructive of the remarks invariably made upon any one who has acted in an unusual manner, is that he must be mad.

[1] Bernardin de St. Pierre, *Œuv.*, xii. 79.
[2] To Adam Smith. Burton, 380.
[3] Burton, 381.

This universal criticism upon the unwonted really tells us nothing, because the term may cover any state of mind from a warranted dissent from established custom, down to absolute dementia. Rousseau was called mad when he took to wearing plain clothes and living frugally. He was called mad when he quitted the town and went to live in the country. The same facile explanation covered his quarrel with importunate friends at the Hermitage. Voltaire called him mad for saying that if there were perfect harmony of taste and temperament between the king's daughter and the executioner's son, the pair ought to be allowed to marry. We who are not forced by conversational necessities to hurry to a judgment, may hesitate to take either taste for the country, or for frugal living, or even for democratic extravagances, as a mark of a disordered mind. The verdict that Rousseau was mad, stated in this general and trenchant way, is quite uninteresting, and teaches us nothing.[1] That his conduct towards Hume was inconsistent with perfect mental soundness is quite plain. Instead of paying ourselves with phrases like monomania, it is more useful shortly to trace the conditions which prepared the way for mental derangement, because this is the only means of

[1] A very common but random opinion traces Rousseau's insanity to certain disagreeable habits avowed in the Confessions. They may have contributed in some small degree to depression of vital energies, though for that matter Rousseau's strength and power of endurance were remarkable to the end. But they certainly did not produce a mental state in the least corresponding to that particular variety of insanity, which possesses definitely marked features. See a careful description of this variety in a paper contributed by Dr. Maudsley to the *Journal of Mental Science* for July, 1868.

understanding either its nature, or the degree to which it extended. These conditions in Rousseau's case are perfectly simple and obvious to any one who recognises the principle, that the essential facts of such mental disorder as his must be sought not in the symptoms, but from the whole range of moral and intellectual constitution, acted on by physical states, and acting on them in turn.

Rousseau was born with an organization of extreme sensibility. This predisposition was further deepened by the application in early youth of mental influences specially calculated to heighten juvenile sensibility. Corrective discipline from circumstance and from formal instruction was wholly absent, and thus the particular excess in his temperament became ever more and more exaggerated, and encroached at a rate of geometrical progression upon all the rest of his impulses and faculties; these, if he had been happily placed under some of the many forms of wholesome social pressure, would on the contrary have gradually reduced his sensibility to more normal proportion. When the vicious excess had decisively rooted itself in his character, he came to Paris, where it was irritated into further activity by the uncongeniality of the surrounding medium. Hence the growth of a marked unsociality, taking literary form in the Discourses, and practical form in his retirement from the town. The slow depravation of the affective life was hastened by solitude, by sensuous expansion, by the long musings of literary compo-

sition. Harsh and unjust treatment prolonged for many months introduced a slight but genuinely misanthropic element of bitterness, into what had hitherto been an excess of feeling about himself, rather than any positive feeling of hostility or suspicion about others. Finally and perhaps above all else, he was the victim of tormenting bodily pain, and of sleeplessness which resulted from it. The agitation and excitement of the journey to England, completed the sum of the conditions of disturbance, and as soon as ever he was settled at Wootton, and had leisure to brood over the incidents of the few weeks since his arrival in England, the disorder which had long been spreading through his impulses and affections, suddenly but by a most natural sequence extended to the faculties of his intelligence, and he became the prey of delusion, a delusion which was not yet fixed, but which ultimately became so.

'He has only *felt* during the whole course of his life,' wrote Hume sympathetically; 'and in this respect his sensibility rises to a pitch beyond what I have seen any example of; but it still gives him a more acute feeling of pain than of pleasure. He is like a man who was stript not only of his clothes, but of his skin, and turned out in that situation to combat with the rude and boisterous elements.'[1] A morbid affective state of this kind and of such a degree of intensity, was the sure antecedent of a morbid intellectual state, general or partial, depressed or exalted. One who is the prey

[1] Burton, 314.

of unsound feelings, if they are only marked enough and persistent enough, naturally ends by a correspondingly unsound arrangement of all or some of his ideas to match, and the intelligence is seduced into finding supports in misconception of circumstances, for the misconception of human relation which had its root in disordered emotion. This completes the breach of correspondence between the man's nature and the external facts with which he has to deal, though the breach may not, and in Rousseau's case certainly did not, extend along the whole line of feeling and judgment. That some process of nervous degeneration was going on to produce such a perversion of the mental relations to the outer conditions of life, nobody holding the modern theories of the mind will be likely to deny; nor that Rousseau's delusion about Hume's sinister feeling and designs, which was the first definite manifestation of positive unsoundness in the sphere of the intelligence, was a last result of the gradual development of an inherited predisposition to affective unsoundness, which unhappily for the man's history had never been counteracted either by a strenuous education, or by the wholesome urgencies of life.

We have only to remember that with him, as with the rest of us, there was entire unity of nature, without cataclysm or marvel or inexplicable rupture of mental continuity. All the facts came in an order that might have been foretold; they all lay together, with their foundations down in physical temperament; the facts which made Rousseau's name renowned and

his influence a great force, along with those which made his life a scandal to others and a misery to himself. The deepest root of moral disorder lies in an immoderate expectation of happiness, and this immoderate unlawful expectation was the mark alike of his character and his work. The exaltation of emotion over intelligence was the secret of his most striking production; the same exaltation, by gaining increased mastery over his whole existence, at length passed the limit of sanity and wrecked him. The tendency of the dominant side of a character towards diseased exaggeration is a fact of daily observation. The ruin which the excess of strong religious imagination works in natures without the quality of energetic objective reaction, was shown in the case of Rousseau's contemporary, Cowper, whose delusions about the wrath of god were equally pitiable and equally a source of torment to their victim, with Rousseau's delusions about the malignity of his mysterious plotters among men. We must call such a condition unsound, but the important thing is to remember that this insanity was only a modification of certain specially marked tendencies of the sufferer's sanity.

The desire to protect himself against the defamation of his enemies led him at this time to compose that account of his own life, which is probably the only one of his writings that continues to be generally read. He composed the first part of the Confessions during the autumn and winter of 1766. The idea of giving his memoirs to the public was an old one, originally

suggested by one of his publishers. To write memoirs of one's own life was one of the fancies of the time, but like all else, it became in Rousseau's hand something more far-reaching and sincere than a passing fashion. Other people wrote polite histories of their outer lives, amply coloured with romantic decorations; Rousseau with unquailing veracity plunged into the inmost depths, hiding nothing that would be likely to make him either ridiculous or hateful in common opinion, and inventing nothing that could attract much sympathy or much admiration. Though, as has been pointed out already, the Confessions abound in small inaccuracies of date, hardly to be avoided by an oldish man in reference to the facts of his boyhood, whether a Rousseau or a Goethe, yet their substantial truthfulness is made more evident with every addition to our materials for testing them. When all the circumstances of Rousseau's life are weighed, and when full account has been taken of his proved delinquencies, we yet perceive that he was at bottom a character as essentially sincere, truthful, careful of fact and reality, as is consistent with the general empire of sensation over untrained intelligence.[1] As for the egoism of the Confessions, it is hard to see how a man is to tell the story of his own life without egoism. And it may be worth adding that the self-feeling which comes to the surface and asserts itself, is in a great many cases far

[1] For an instructive and, as it appears to me, a trustworthy account of the temper in which the Confessions were written, see the 4th of the *Rêveries*.

less vicious and debilitating than the same feeling nursed internally with troglodytish shyness. But Rousseau's egoism manifested itself perversely. This is true to a certain small extent, and one or two of the disclosures in the Confessions are in very nauseous matter, and are made, moreover, in a very nauseous manner. There are some vices whose grotesqueness stirs us more deeply than downright atrocities, and we read of certain puerilities avowed by Rousseau, with a livelier impatience than old Cellini quickens in us, when he confesses to a horrible assassination. This morbid form of self-feeling is only less disgusting than the allied form which clothes itself in the phrases of religious exaltation. And there is not much of it. Blot out half a dozen pages from the Confessions, and the egoism is no more perverted than in the confessions of Augustin or of Cardan.

These remarks are not made to extenuate Rousseau's faults, or to raise the popular estimate of his character, but simply in the interests of a greater precision of criticism, which in England has nearly always been of the most vulgar superficiality in respect to him, from the time of Horace Walpole downwards. The Confessions, in their least agreeable parts, or rather especially in those parts, are the expression, on a new side and in a peculiar way, of the same notion of the essential goodness of nature and the importance of understanding nature and restoring its reign, which inspired the Discourses and Emilius. 'I would fain show to my fellows,' he began, 'a man

in all the truth of nature,' and he cannot be charged with any failure to keep his word. He despised opinion, and so was careless to observe whether or no this revelation of human nakedness was likely to add to the popular respect for nature and the natural man. After all, considering that literature is for the most part a hollow and pretentious phantasmagoria of mimic figures posing in breeches and peruke, we may try to forgive certain cruel blows to the dignified assumptions, solemn words, and high heels of convention, in one who would not lie nor dissemble kinship with the fourfooted. Intense subjective preoccupations in markedly emotional natures all tend to come to the same end, and the distance from Rousseau's odious erotics to the glorified ecstasies of many a poor female saint is not far. In any case, let us know the facts about human nature, the pathological facts no less than the others; these are the first thing, and the second, and the third also.

The exaltation of the opening page of the Confessions is shocking. No monk nor saint ever wrote anything more revolting in its blasphemous self-feeling. But the exaltation almost instantly became calm, when the course of the story necessarily drew him into dealings with objective facts, even muffled as they were by memory and imagination. The broodings over old reminiscence soothed him, the labour of composition occupied him, and he forgot, as the modern reader would never know from internal evidence, that he was preparing a vindication of his

life and character against the infamies with which Hume and others were supposed to be industriously denigrating them. He was on good terms with one or two of the great people in his neighbourhood, and kept up a gracious and social correspondence with them. He was greatly pleased by a compliment which was paid to him by the government, apparently through the interest of general Conway. The duty that had been paid upon certain boxes forwarded to Rousseau from Switzerland, was recouped by the treasury,[1] and the arrangements for the annual pension of one hundred pounds were concluded and accepted by him, after duly satisfying himself that Hume was not the indirect author of the benefaction.[2] The weather was the worst possible, but whenever it allowed him to go out of doors, he found delight in climbing the heights around him in search of curious mosses; for he had now come to think the discovery of a single new plant a hundred times more useful than to have the whole human race listening to your sermons for half a century.[3] 'This indolent and contemplative life that you do not approve,' he wrote to the elder Mirabeau, 'and for which I pretend to make no excuses, becomes every day more delicious to me: to wander alone among the trees and rocks that surround my dwelling; to muse or rather to extravagate at my ease, and as you say to stand gaping in the air; when my brain gets too hot, to calm it by

[1] Letter to the Duke of Grafton, Feb. 27, 1767. *Corr.*, v. 98; also 118.
[2] *Corr.*, v. 133; also to general Conway (Mar. 26), p. 137, etc.
[3] *Corr.*, v. 37.

dissecting some moss or fern; in short to surrender myself without restraint to my phantasies, which, heaven be thanked, are all under my own control,—all that is for me the height of enjoyment, to which I can imagine nothing superior in this world for a man of my age and in my condition.'[1]

This contentment did not last long. The snow kept him indoors. The excitement of composition abated. Theresa harassed him by ignoble quarrels with the women in the kitchen. His delusions returned with greater force than before. He believed that the whole English nation was in a plot against him, that all his letters were opened before reaching London and before leaving it, that all his movements were closely watched, and that he was surrounded by unseen guards to prevent any attempt at escape.[2] At length these delusions got such complete mastery over him, that in a paroxysm of terror he fled away from Wootton, leaving money, papers, and all else behind him. Nothing was heard of him for a fortnight, when Mr. Davenport received a letter from him dated at Spalding, in Lincolnshire. Mr. Davenport's conduct throughout was marked by a humanity and patience that do him the highest honour. He confesses himself 'quite moved to read poor Rousseau's mournful epistle.' 'You shall see his letter,' he writes to Hume, 'the first opportunity; but God help him, I can't for pity give a copy; and 'tis so much mixed

[1] *Corr.*, v. 88.

[2] See the letters to Du Peyrou, of the 2nd and 4th of April, 1767. *Corr.*, v. 140—7.

with his own poor little private concerns, that it would not be right in me to do it.'[1] This is the generosity which makes Hume's impatience and that of his mischievous advisers in Paris appear so petty, for Rousseau had behaved quite as ill to Mr. Davenport as he had done to Hume, and had received at least equal services from him.[2] The good man at once sent a servant to Spalding in search of his unhappy guest, but Rousseau had again disappeared. The parson of the parish had passed several hours of each day in his company, and had found him cheerful and good-humoured. He had had a blue coat made for himself, and had written a long letter to the lord chancellor, praying him to appoint a guard, at Rousseau's own expense, to escort him in safety out of the kingdom where enemies were plotting against his life.[3] He was next heard of at Dover (May 18), whence he wrote a letter to general Conway, setting forth his delusion in full form.[4] He is the victim of a plot; the conspirators will not allow him to leave the island, lest he should divulge in other countries the outrages to which he has been subjected here; he perceives the sinister manœuvres that will arrest him if he attempts to put his foot on board ship. But he warns them that his tragical disappearance cannot take place without creating inquiry. Still if general Con-

[1] Davenport to Hume; Burton, 367—71.
[2] J. J. R. to Davenport, Dec. 22, 1766, and April 30, 1767. *Corr.*, v. 66, 152.
[3] Burton, 369, 375.
[4] *Corr.*, v. 153.

way will only let him go, he gives his word of honour that he will not publish a line of the memoirs he has written, nor ever divulge the wrongs which he has suffered in England. 'I see my last hour approaching,' he concluded; 'I am determined, if necessary, to advance to meet it, and to perish or be free; there is no longer any other alternative.' On the same evening on which he wrote this letter (about May 20-22), the forlorn wretch took boat and landed at Calais, where he seems at once to have recovered his composure and right mind.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE END.

BEFORE leaving England, Rousseau had received more than one long and rambling letter from a man who was as unlike the rest of mankind as he was unlike them himself, the marquis of Mirabeau (1715-89), the violent, tyrannical, pedantic, humoristic sire of a more famous son. Perhaps we might say that Mirabeau and Rousseau were the two most singular originals then known to men, and Mirabeau's originality was in some respects the more salient of the two. There is less of the conventional tone of the eighteenth century Frenchman in him than in any other conspicuous man of the time, though like many other headstrong and despotic souls he picked up the current notions of philanthropy and human brotherhood. He really was by force of temperament that rebel against the narrowness, trimness, and moral formalism of the time, which Rousseau only claimed and attempted to be, with the secondary degree of success that follows vehemence without native strength. Mirabeau was a sort of Swift, who had strangely taken up the trade of friendship for man and adopted the phrases

of perfectibility; while Rousseau was meant for a Fénélon, only he became possessed of unclean devils.

Mirabeau, like Jean Jacques himself, was so impressed by the marked tenour of contemporary feeling, its prudential didactics, its formulistic sociality, that his native insurgency only found vent in private life, while in public he played pedagogue to the human race. Friend of Quesnai and orthodox economist as he was, he delighted in Rousseau's books: 'I know no morality that goes deeper than yours; it strikes like a thunderbolt, and advances with the steady assurance of truth, for you are always true, according to your notions for the moment.' He wrote to tell him so, but he told him at the same time at great length, and with a caustic humour and incoherency less academic than Rabelaisian, that he had behaved absurdly in his quarrel with Hume. Nothing more quaint than the appearance of a few of the sacramental phrases of the sect of the economists, floating in the midst of a copious stream of egoistic whimsicalities. He concludes with a diverting enumeration of all his country seats and demesnes, with their respective advantages and disadvantages, and prays Rousseau to take up his residence in whichever of them may please him best.[1]

Immediately on landing at Calais Rousseau informed Mirabeau, who lost no time in conveying him stealthily, for the warrant of the parliament of Paris was still in force, to a house at Fleury. But Mira-

[1] Streckeisen, ii. 315—28.

beau, to use his own account of himself, 'bore letters as a plum-tree bears plums,' and wrote to his guest with strange humoristic volubility, and droll imperturbable temper, as one who knew his Jean Jacques. He exhorts him in many sheets to harden himself against excessive sensibility, to be less pusillanimous, to take society more lightly, as his own light estimate of its worth should lead him to do. 'No doubt, its outside is a shifting surface-picture, nay even ridiculous, if you will; but if the irregular and ceaseless flight of butterflies wearies you in your walk, it is your own fault for looking continuously at what was only made to adorn and vary the scene. But how many social virtues, how much gentleness and considerateness, how many benevolent actions, remain at the bottom of it all.'[1] Enormous manifestoes of the doctrine of perfectibility were not in the least degree either soothing or interesting to Rousseau, and the thrusts of shrewd candour at his expense might touch his fancy on a single occasion, but not oftener. Two humourists are so seldom successful in amusing one another. Besides, Mirabeau insisted that Jean Jacques should read this or that of his books. Rousseau answered that he would try, but warned him of the folly of it. 'I do not engage always to follow what you say, because it has always been painful to me to think, and fatiguing to follow the thoughts of other people, and at present I cannot do so at all.'[2] Though they continued to be good friends, Rousseau

[1] Streckeisen, ii. 337. [2] June 19, 1767. *Corr.*, v. 172.

only remained three or four weeks at Fleury. His old acquaintance at Montmorency, the prince of Conti, partly perhaps from contrition at the rather unchivalrous fashion in which his great friends had hustled him away at the time of the decree of the parliament of Paris, offered him refuge at one of his country seats at Trye, near Gisors. Here he installed Rousseau under the name of Renou, either to silence the indiscreet curiosity of neighbours, or to gratify a whim of Rousseau himself.

Rousseau remained for a year (June, 1767—June, 1768), composing the second part of the Confessions, in a condition of extreme mental confusion. Dusky phantoms walked with him once more. He knew the gardener, the servants, the neighbours, all to be in the pay of Hume, and that he was watched day and night with a view to his destruction.[1] He entirely gave up either reading or writing, save a very small number of letters, and he declared that to take up the pen even for these was like lifting a load of iron. The only interest he had was botany, and for this his passion became daily more intense. He appears to have been as contented as a child, so long as he could employ himself in long expeditions in search of new plants, in arranging a herbarium, in watching the growth of the germ of some rare seed which needed careful tending. But the story had once more the same conclusion. He fled from Trye, as he had fled from Wootton. He meant apparently to go to Chambéri, drawn by the

[1] *Corr.*, v. 267, 375.

deep magnetic force of old memories that seemed long extinct. But at Grenoble on his way thither he encountered a substantial grievance. A man alleged that he had lent Rousseau a few francs seven years previously. He was undoubtedly mistaken, and was fully convicted of his mistake by proper authorities, but Rousseau's correspondents suffered none the less for that. We all know when monomania seizes a man, how adroitly and how eagerly it colours every incident. The mistaken claim was proof demonstrative of that frightful and tenebrous conspiracy, which they might have thought a delusion hitherto, but which, alas, this showed to be only too tragically real; and so on, through many pages of droning wretchedness.[1] Then we find him at Bourgoin, where he spent some months in shabby taverns, and then many months more at Monquin, on adjoining uplands.[2] The estrangement from Theresa, of which enough has been said already,[3] was added to his other torments. He resolved, as so many of the self-tortured have done since, to go in search of happiness to the western lands beyond the Atlantic, where the elixir of bliss is thought by wearied easterns to be inexhaustible and assured. Almost in the same page he turns his face eastwards, and dreams of ending his days peacefully among the islands of the Grecian archipelago. Next he gravely not only designed, but actually took measures, to return to Wootton. All

[1] *Corr.*, v. 330—81, 408, etc.

[2] Bourgoin, Aug. 1768 to March, 1769. Monquin, to July, 1770.

[3] Vol. i. ch. 4.

was no more than the momentary incoherent purpose of a sick man's dream, the weary distraction of one who had deliberately devoted himself to isolation from his fellows, without first sitting down carefully to count the cost, or to measure the inner resources which he possessed to meet the deadly strain that isolation puts on every one of a man's mental fibres. Geographical loneliness is to some a condition of their fullest strength, but most of the few who dare to make a moral solitude for themselves, find that they have assuredly not made peace. Such solitude, as Calvin said of the study of the apocalypse, either finds a man mad, or leaves him so. Not all can play the stoic who will, and it is still more certain that one who like Rousseau has lain down with the doctrine that in all things imaginable what he cannot do with pleasure, it is impossible for him to do at all, will end in a condition of profound impotence in respect to pleasure itself.

In July, 1770, he made his way to Paris, and here he remained eight years longer, not without the introduction of a certain degree of order into his outer life, though the clouds of vague suspicion and distrust, half bitter, half mournful, hung heavily as ever upon his mind. The Dialogues, which he wrote at this period (1775-6) to vindicate his memory from the defamation that was to be launched in a dark torrent upon the world at the moment of his death, could not possibly have been written by a man in his right mind. Yet the best of the Musings, which were written still nearer the end, are master-

pieces in the style of contemplative prose. The third, the fifth, the seventh, especially abound in that even, full, mellow gravity of tone which is so rare in literature, because the deep absorption of spirit which is its source, is so rare in life. They reveal Rousseau to us with a truth beyond that attained in any of his other pieces—a mournful sombre figure, looming shadowily in the dark glow of sundown among sad and desolate places. There is nothing like them in the French tongue, which is the speech of the clear, the cheerful, or the august among men; nothing like this sonorous plainsong, the strangely melodious expression in the music of prose of a darkened spirit which yet had imaginative visions of beatitude.

It is interesting to look on one or two pictures of the last waste and obscure years of the man, whose words were at this time silently fermenting for good and for evil in many spirits—a Schiller, a Herder, a Jeanne Phlipon, a Robespierre, a Gabriel Mirabeau, and many hundreds of those whose destiny was not to lead, but ingenuously to follow. Rousseau seems to have repulsed nearly all his ancient friends, and to have settled down with dogged resolve to his old trade of copying music. In summer he rose at five, copied music until half-past seven; munched his breakfast, arranging on paper during the process such plants as he had gathered the previous afternoon; then he returned to his work, dined at half-past twelve, and went forth to take coffee at some public place.

He would not return from his walk until nightfall, and he retired at half-past ten. The pavements of Paris were hateful to him, because they tore his feet, and, said he, with significant antithesis, 'I am not afraid of death, but I dread pain.' He always found his way as fast as possible to one of the suburbs, and one of his greatest delights was to watch Mont Valérien in the sunset. 'Atheists,' he said calumniously, 'do not love the country; they like the environs of Paris, where you have all the pleasures of the city, good cheer, books, pretty women; but if you take these things away, then they die of weariness,'—which may have been true of some of the atheists, but certainly was not true of Diderot, for instance. The note of every bird held him attentive, and filled his mind with delicious images. A graceful story is told of two swallows who made a nest in Rousseau's sleeping-room, and hatched the eggs there. 'I was no more than a doorkeeper for them,' he said, 'for I kept opening the window for them every moment. They used to fly with a great stir round my head, until I had fulfilled the duties of the tacit convention between these swallows and me'—the notion of a social contract thus intruding even into the picturesque.[1]

In January, 1771, Bernardin de Saint Pierre, author of the ever famous *Paul and Virginia* (1788), finding himself at the Cape of Good Hope, wrote to a friend in France just previously to his return to

[1] Dusaulx, p. 50.

Europe, counting among other delights that of seeing two summers in one year.[1] Rousseau happened to see the letter, and expressed a desire to make the acquaintance of a man who in returning home should think of that as one of his chief pleasures. To this we owe the following pictures of an interior from Saint Pierre's hand.

In the month of June in 1772, a friend having offered to take me to see J. J. R., he brought me to a house in the rue Plâtrière, nearly opposite to the Hotel de la Poste. We mounted to the fourth story. We knocked, and madame Rousseau opened the door. 'Come in, gentlemen,' she said, 'you will find my husband.' We passed through a very small antechamber, where the household utensils were neatly arranged, and from that into a room where Jean Jacques was seated in an overcoat and a white cap, busy copying music. He rose with a smiling face, offered us chairs, and resumed his work, at the same time taking a part in conversation. He was thin and of middle height. One shoulder struck me as rather higher than the other . . . . otherwise he was very well proportioned. He had a brown complexion, some colour on his cheek-bones, a good mouth, a well-made nose, a rounded and lofty brow, and eyes full of fire. The oblique lines falling from the nostrils to the extremity of the lips, and which mark a physiognomy, in his expressed great sensibility, and something even painful. One observed in his face three or four of the characteristics of melancholy—the deep receding eyes and the elevation of the eyebrows; you saw profound sadness in the wrinkles of the brow; a keen and even caustic gaiety in a thousand little creases at the corners of the eyes, of which the orbits entirely disappeared when he laughed. . . . . Near him was a spinette on which

[1] The life of Bernardin de St. Pierre (1737—1814) was nearly as irregular as that of his friend and master, but his character was essentially crafty and selfish, like that of many sentimentalists of the first order.

from time to time he tried an air. Two little beds of blue and white striped calico, a table, and a few chairs, made the stock of his furniture. On the walls hung a plan of the forest and park of Montmorency, where he had once lived, and an engraving of the king of England, his old benefactor. His wife was sitting mending linen; a canary sang in a cage hung from the ceiling; sparrows came for crumbs on to the sills of the windows, which on the side of the street were open; while in the window of the antechamber we noticed boxes and pots filled with plants such as it pleases nature to sow. There was in the whole effect of his little establishment an air of cleanness, peace, and simplicity, which was delightful.

A few days after, Rousseau returned the visit. 'He wore a round wig, well powdered and curled, carrying a hat under his arm, and in a full suit of nankeen. His whole exterior was modest, but extremely neat.' He expressed his passion for good coffee, saying that this and ice were the only two luxuries for which he cared. Saint Pierre happened to have brought some from the Isle of Bourbon, so on the following day he rashly sent Rousseau a small packet, which at first produced a polite letter of thanks; but the day after the letter of thanks, came one of harsh protest against the ignominy of receiving presents which could not be returned, and bidding the unfortunate donor to choose between taking his coffee back or never seeing his new friend again. A fair bargain was ultimately arranged, Saint Pierre receiving in exchange for his coffee some curious root or other and a book on ichthyology. Immediately afterwards he went to dine with his sage. He arrived at eleven in the forenoon, and they conversed until half-past twelve.

Then his wife laid the cloth. He took a bottle of wine, and as he put it on the table, asked whether we should have enough, or if I was fond of drinking. How many are there of us, said I. Three, he said, you, my wife, and me. Well, I went on, when I drink wine and am alone, I drink a good half bottle, and I drink a trifle more when I am with friends. In that case, he answered, we shall not have enough; I must go down into the cellar. He brought up a second bottle. His wife served two dishes, one of small tarts, and another which was covered. He said, showing me the first, That is your dish and the other is mine. 'I don't eat much pastry,' I said, 'but I hope to be allowed to taste what you have got.' 'Oh, they are both common,' he replied; 'but most people don't care for this. 'Tis a Swiss dish; a compound of lard, mutton, vegetables and chestnuts.' It was excellent. After these two dishes, we had slices of beef in salad; then biscuits and cheese; after which his wife served the coffee.

. . . . . .

One morning when I was at his house I saw various domestics either coming for rolls of music, or bringing them to him to copy. He received them standing and uncovered. He said to some, 'The price is so much,' and received the money: to others, 'How soon must I return my copy?' 'My mistress would like to have it back in a fortnight.' 'Oh, that's out of the question: I have work, I can't do it in less than three weeks.' I inquired why he did not take his talents to better market. 'Ah,' he answered, 'there are two Rousseaus in the world: one rich, or who might have been if he had chosen; a man capricious, singular, fantastic; this is the Rousseau of the public; the other is obliged to work for his living, the Rousseau whom you see.'[1]

They often took long rambles together, and always got on most harmoniously, unless St. Pierre offered to pay for such refreshment as they might take, when a furious explosion was sure to follow. Here is one more picture, without explosion.

[1] *Œuv.*, xii. 69, 73.

An Easter Monday Excursion to Mont Valérien.

We made an appointment at a café in the Champs Elysées. In the morning we took some chocolate. The wind was westerly, and the air fresh. The sun was surrounded by white clouds, spread in masses over an azure sky. Reaching the bois de Boulogne by eight o'clock, Jean Jacques set to work botanizing. As he collected his little harvest, we kept walking along. We had gone through part of the wood, when in the midst of the solitude we perceived two young girls, one of whom was arranging the other's hair. [Reminded them of some verses of Virgil.] . .

Arrived on the edge of the river, we crossed the ferry with a number of people whom devotion was taking to Mont Valérien. We climbed an uncommonly stiff slope, and were hardly on the top before hunger overtook us and we began to think of dining. Rousseau then led the way towards a hermitage, where he knew we could make sure of hospitality. The brother who opened to us, conducted us to the chapel, where they were reciting the litanies of providence, which are extremely beautiful. . . When we had prayed, Jean Jacques said to me with genuine feeling: 'Now I feel what is said in the gospel, Where several of you are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them. There is a sentiment of peace and comfort here that penetrates the soul.' I replied, 'If Fénélon were alive, you would be a Catholic.' 'Ah,' said he, the tears in his eyes, 'if Fénélon were alive, I would seek to be his lackey that I might become his valet de chambre.'

Presently we were introduced into the refectory; we seated ourselves during the reading. The subject was the injustice of the complainings of men: God has brought him from nothing, he oweth him nothing. After the reading Rousseau said to me in a voice of deep emotion: Ah, how happy is the man who can believe. . . . . We walked about for some time in the cloister and the gardens. They command an immense prospect. Paris in the distance reared her towers covered with light, and made a crown to the far-spreading landscape. The brightness of the view contrasted with the great leaden clouds that rolled after one

another from the west, and seemed to fill the valley. . . . . In the afternoon rain came on, as we approached the Porte Maillot. We took shelter along with a crowd of other holiday folk under some chestnut trees whose leaves were coming out. One of the waiters of a tavern perceiving Jean Jacques, rushed to him full of joy, exclaiming 'What, is it you, *mon bonhomme?* Why it is a whole age since we have seen you.' Rousseau replied cheerfully, ''Tis because my wife has been ill, and I myself have been out of sorts.' '*Mon pauvre bonhomme*,' replied the lad, 'you must not stop here; come in, come in, and I will find room for you.' He hurried us along to a room upstairs, where in spite of the crowd he procured for us chairs and a table, and bread and wine. I said to Jean Jacques, He seems very familiar with you. He answered, Yes, we have known one another some years. We used to come here in fine weather, my wife and I, to eat a cutlet of an evening.[1]

Things did not continue to go thus smoothly. One day St. Pierre went to see him, and was received without a word, and with stiff and gloomy mien. He tried to talk, but only got monosyllables; he took up a book, and this drew a sarcasm which sent him forth from the room. For more than two months they did not meet. At length they had an accidental encounter at a street corner. Rousseau accosted St. Pierre, and with a gradually warming sensibility proceeded thus: 'There are days when I want to be alone, and crave privacy. I come back from my solitary expeditions so calm and contented. There I have not been wanting to anybody, nor has anybody been wanting to me,' and so on.[2] He expressed this humour more pointedly on some other occasion, when he said that there were

[1] *Œuv.*, xii. 104, etc.; and also the *Préambule de l'Arcadie*, *Œuv.*, vii. 64—5.
[2] St. Pierre, xii. 81—3.

times in which he fled from the eyes of men as from Parthian arrows. As one said, who knew from experience, the fate of his most intimate friend depended on a word or a gesture.[1] Another of them declared that he knew Rousseau's style of discarding a friend by letter so thoroughly, that he felt confident he could supply Rousseau's place in case of illness or absence.[2] In much of this we suspect that the quarrel was perfectly justified. Sociality meant a futile display before unworthy and condescending curiosity. 'It is not I whom they care for,' he very truly said, 'but public opinion and talk about me, without a thought of what real worth I may have.' Hence his steadfast refusal to go out to dine or sup. The mere impertinence of the desire to see him was illustrated by some coxcombs who insisted with a famous actress of his acquaintance, that she should invite the strange philosopher to meet them. She was aware that no known force would persuade Rousseau to come, so dressed up her tailor as philosopher, bade him keep a silent tongue, and vanish suddenly without a word of farewell. The tailor was long philosophically silent, and by the time that wine had loosed his tongue, the rest of the company were too far gone to perceive that the supposed Rousseau was chattering vulgar nonsense.[3] We can believe that with admirers of this stamp Rousseau was well pleased to let tailors or

[1] Dusaulx, p. 81. For his quarrel with Rousseau, see pp. 130, etc.

[2] Rulhières in Dusaulx, p. 179. For a strange interview between Rulhières and Rousseau, see pp. 185—6.

[3] Musset-Pathay, i. 181.

others stand in his place. There were some, however, of a different sort, who flitted across his sight and then either vanished of their own accord, or were silently dismissed, from madame de Genlis up to Grétry and Gluck. With Gluck he seems to have quarrelled for setting his music to French words, when he must have known that Italian was the only tongue fit for music.[1] Yet it was remarked that no one ever heard him speak ill of others. His enemies, the figures of his delusion, were vaguely denounced in many dronings, but they remained in dark shadow and were unnamed. When Voltaire paid his famous last visit to the capital (1778), some one thought of paying court to Rousseau by making a mock of the triumphal reception of the old warrior, but Rousseau harshly checked the detractor. It is true that in 1770—1 he gave to some few of his acquaintances one or more readings of the Confessions, which contained much painful matter for many people still living, among the rest for madame d'Epinay. She wrote justifiably enough to the lieutenant of police, praying that all such readings might be prohibited, and it is believed that they were so prohibited.[2]

In 1769, when Polish anarchy was at its height, as if to show at once how profound the anarchy was, and how profound the faith among many minds in the

[1] Ibid.

[2] Musset-Pathay, i. 209. Rousseau forbade the publication of his Confessions before the year 1800. Notwithstanding this, printers procured copies surreptitiously, perhaps through Theresa, ever in need of money; the first part was published three years, and the second part ten years, after his death, in 1781 and 1788 respectively. See Musset-Pathay, ii. 464.

power of the new French theories, an application was made to Mably to draw up a scheme for the renovation of distracted Poland. Mably's notions won little esteem from the persons who had sought for them, and in 1771 a similar application was made to Rousseau in his Parisian garret. He replied in the Considerations on the Government of Poland, which are written with a good deal of vigour of expression, but contain nothing that needs further discussion. He hinted to the Poles with some shrewdness that a curtailment of their territory by their neighbours was not far off,[1] and the prediction was rapidly fulfilled by the first partition of Poland in the following year.

He was asked one day of what nation he had the highest opinion. He answered, the Spanish. The Spanish nation, he said, has a character; if it is not rich, it still preserves all its pride and self-respect in the midst of its poverty; and it is animated by a single spirit, for it has not been scourged by the conflicting opinions of philosophy.[2]

He was extremely poor for these last eight years of his life. He seems to have drawn the pension which George III. had settled on him, for not more than one year. We do not know why he refused to receive it afterwards. A well-meaning friend, when the arrears amounted to between six and seven thousand francs,

[1] Ch. v. p. 246. Such a curtailment, he says, 'would no doubt be a great evil for the parts dismembered, but it would be a great advantage for the body of the nation.' He urged federation as the root of any solid improvement in their affairs.

[2] Bernardin de St. Pierre, xii. 37. Comte had a similar admiration for Spain, and for the same reason.

applied for it on his behalf, and a draft for the money was sent. Rousseau gave the offender a vigorous rebuke for meddling in affairs that did not concern him, and the draft was destroyed. Other attempts to induce him to draw this money failed equally.[1] Yet he had only about fifty pounds a year to live on, together with the modest amount which he earned by copying music.[2]

The sting of indigence began to make itself felt towards 1777. His health became worse and he could not work. Theresa was waxing old, and could no longer attend to the small cares of the household. More than one person offered them shelter and provision, and the old distractions as to a home in which to end his days began once more. At length M. Girardin prevailed upon him to come and live at Ermenonville, an estate of his some twenty miles from Paris. A dense cloud of obscure misery hangs over the last months of this forlorn existence. No tragedy had ever a fifth act so squalid. Theresa's character seems to have developed into something veritably bestial. Rousseau's terrors of the designs of his enemies returned with great violence. He thought he was imprisoned, and he knew he had no means of escape. One day (July 2, 1778), suddenly and without a single warning symptom, all drew to an end, the sensations which had been the ruling part of his life were affected by pleasure and pain no more,

[1] Corancez, quoted in Musset-Pathay, i. 239. Also *Corr.*, vi. 295.
[2] *Corr.*, vi. 303.

the dusky phantoms all vanished into space, and he died. The surgeons reported that the cause of his death was apoplexy, but a suspicion has haunted the world ever since, that he destroyed himself by a pistol-shot. We cannot tell. There is no inherent improbability in the fact of his having committed suicide. In the New Heloïsa he had thrown the conditions which justified self-destruction, into a distinct formula. Fifteen years before, he declared that his own case fell within the conditions he had prescribed, and that he was meditating action.[1] Only seven years before, he had implied that a man had the right to deliver himself of the burden of his own life, if its miseries were intolerable and irremediable.[2] This, however, counts for nothing in the absence of some kind of positive evidence, and of that there is just enough to leave the manner of his end a little doubtful.[3] Once more, we cannot tell.

By the serene moon-rise of a summer night, his

[1] See above, pp. 16—7. [2] *Corr.*, vi. 264.

[3] The case stands thus :—1. There was the certificate of five doctors, attesting that Rousseau had died of apoplexy. 2. The assertion of M. Girardin, in whose house he died, that there was no hole in his head, nor poison in the stomach or viscera, nor other sign of self-destruction. 3. The assertion of Theresa to the same effect. On the other hand, we have the assertion of Corancez, that on his journey to Ermenonville on the day of Rousseau's burial a horse-master on the road had said, 'Who would have supposed that M. Rousseau would have destroyed himself?'—and a variety of inferences from the wording of the certificate, and of Theresa's letter. Musset-Pathay believes in the suicide, and argued very ingeniously against MM. Girardin. But his arguments do not go far beyond verbal ingenuity, showing that suicide was possible, and was consistent with the language of the documents, rather than adducing positive testimony. See vol. i. of his *History*, pp. 268, etc. The controversy was resumed as late as 1861, between the *Figaro* and the *Monde Illustré*. See also M. Jal's *Dict. Crit. de Biog. et d'Hist.*, p. 1091.

body was put under the ground on an island in the midst of a small lake, where poplars throw shadows over the still water, silently figuring the destiny of mortals. Here it remained for sixteen years. Then amid the roar of cannon, the crash of trumpet and drum, and the wild acclamations of a populace gone mad in exultation, terror, fury, the poor dust was transported to the national temple of great men.

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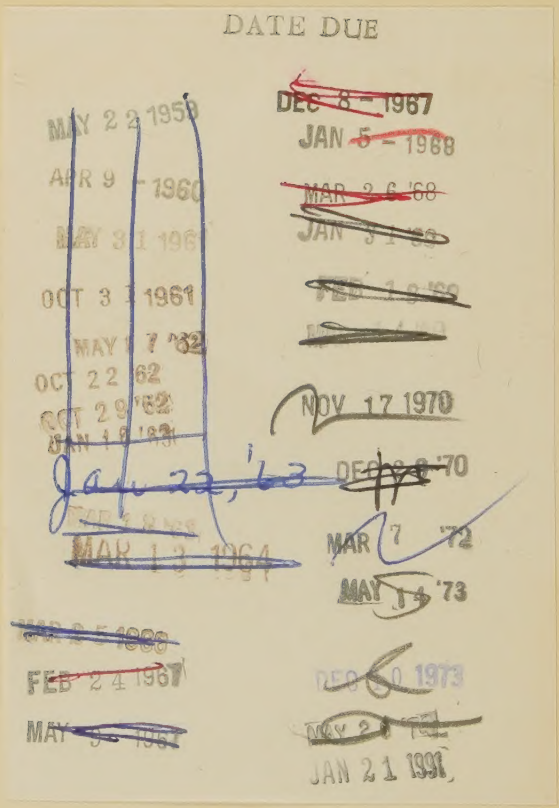
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MAR 7 '72
MAY 14 '73
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